



2025 AHA Institutional Research Enhancement Award (AIREA)

Key Dates

RFP posted:	March 7, 2024
ProposalCentral open:	July 1, 2024
Proposal deadline:	Thur., Sept. 12, 2024
Award notification:	Dec. 2024
Award start:	Jan. 1, 2025

Purpose

To support small-scale research projects related to cardiovascular diseases and brain health at educational institutions that provide baccalaureate or advanced degrees but that have not been major recipients of NIH support. The award supports any part of the full range of basic, clinical and population research and development.

The goals of the program are to:

1. support meritorious research,
2. expose students to research,
3. strengthen the research environment of the institution.

Eligibility

The AHA applies the same institutional eligibility criteria to this award as the NIH uses for its AREA and REAP (R15) awards. Institutions ineligible for the NIH Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA) or the NIH Research Enhancement Award Program (REAP) are also ineligible for this AHA Award.

A signed letter will be required from the Provost or similar official with institution-wide responsibility verifying the eligibility of the applicant institution at the time of application submission. Applicants must provide the letter as part of their applications. This letter is limited to one page in length.

For undergraduate schools, the following eligibility criteria apply:

- The applicant institution must be an accredited public or non-profit private school that grants baccalaureate degrees in biomedical sciences.
- At the time of application submission, all the non-health professional components of the institution together have not received support from the NIH totaling more than \$6 million per year (in both direct and F&A/indirect costs; i.e., the Total Federal Award Amount cited on a Notice of Award) in 4 of the last 7 years. A year is defined as a federal fiscal year: from October 1 through September 30. Note that all activity codes are included in this calculation except the following: C06, S10, and all activity codes starting with a G.
- Qualifying academic component (school, college, center, or institute) within an institution (e.g., School of Arts and Sciences) has an undergraduate student enrollment that is greater than graduate student enrollment.

For health professional schools and graduate schools, the following eligibility criteria will apply:

- The applicant organization must be an accredited public or non-profit private school that grants baccalaureate or advanced degrees in health professions or advanced degrees in biomedical and behavioral sciences.
- The applicant organization may not receive research support from the NIH totaling more than \$6 million per year (in both direct and F&A/indirect costs) in 4 of the last 7 fiscal years. A year is defined as a federal fiscal year: from October 1 through September 30. Note that all activity codes are included in this calculation except the following: C06, S10, and all activity codes starting with a G.
- Health professional schools are accredited institutions that provide education and training leading to a health professional degree, including but not limited to: BSN, MSN, DNP, MD, DDS, DO, PharmD, DVM, OD, DPT, DC, ND, DPM, MOT, OTD, DPT, BME, MSEE, MS-SLP, CScD, SLPD, AuD, MSPO, MSAT, and MPH. Eligible health professional schools/colleges may include schools or colleges of nursing, medicine, dentistry, osteopathy, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, public health, optometry, allied health, chiropractic, naturopathy, podiatry, rehabilitation medicine, physical therapy, orthotics & prosthetics, kinesiology, biomedical engineering, occupational therapy and psychology. Accreditation must be provided by a body approved for such purpose by the Secretary of Education.

Principal Investigator Eligibility

- The PI must have a primary appointment at an NIH R15-eligible institution.
- While no minimum percent effort is specified, the principal investigator must demonstrate that adequate time will be devoted to ensuring the successful completion of the proposed project.

Budget

Award: \$100,000 per year, including 10 percent indirect costs

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.

AHA does **not** require use of the NIH salary cap.

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
- publication costs

No minimum effort requirement. Special consultative services from individuals may be requested, provided the circumstances are fully described in the application.

- All subcontracts for AHA funds used in collaboration with other institutions require prior AHA approval. No more than 10% of total AHA AIREA funds may be requested for use for collaboration with non-AIREA institutions.

Duration: Two years

Total Award Amount: \$200,000

Restrictions

- An applicant may submit only one AIREA application per deadline.
- The PI may not be the PI of an active NIH research grant at the time of award activation.
- An AHA AIREA awardee may not transfer this grant to an AIREA ineligible institution.
Hyperlinks to data/figures/additional information are not permitted in the Research Plan nor any other proposal documents. This includes use of the Precision Medicine Platform for applications and peer review purposes.
- All subcontracts for AHA funds used in collaboration with other institutions require prior AHA approval. No more than 10% of total AHA AIREA funds may be requested for use for collaboration with non-AIREA institutions.

- Awards may not supplement or duplicate currently funded work. Submitted applications must describe projects that are clearly distinct from ongoing research activities in the applicant's laboratory. The awardee may not hold a comparable award as a source of supplementation.
- The applicant may resubmit the same or similar application three times (the original plus two resubmissions). The same or similar application submitted the fourth time will be administratively withdrawn.
- 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.
- The American Heart Association permits the use of a large language model (LLM – e.g. ChatGPT) or an artificial intelligence tool to generate and/or edit content in research proposals submitted for funding. This information must be disclosed at the time of submission. Disclosure of this information does not impact peer review. Should this information not be disclosed accurately, and use of these tools is identified, the proposal may be administratively withdrawn.

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.

The American Heart Association DOES NOT permit the use of a large language model (LLM – e.g. ChatGPT) or an artificial intelligence tool to generate and/or edit content in peer review critiques. Uploading of any portion of a research proposal into a large language model (LLM – e.g. ChatGPT) or an artificial intelligence tool to assist in writing a critique of the proposal is explicitly prohibited as it is a violation of the AHA's Peer Reviewer Certification Statement (to include confidentiality, non-disclosure, and conflict of interest).

The AHA reserves the right to an initial triage, whereby a minimum of half of the submissions may be triaged.

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

Impact: How effectively does the applicant describe for an audience without a science background how this proposal will impact the AHA's mission **to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives**? 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.

Significance: Does this proposal address an important problem or barrier to progress that is broadly related to cardiovascular disease or stroke? If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge or clinical practice be advanced? What will be the effect of this proposal on the concepts, methods and technologies that drive this field? If funded, will the award have a substantial effect on the school/academic component in terms of strengthening the investigative environment and exposing students to research?

Approach: Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the proposal? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics? Does the application provide evidence that the proposal can stimulate the interests of students so that they consider a career in the biomedical or behavioral investigation?

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.

Innovation: Is the proposal original and innovative? For example: Does the proposal challenge existing paradigms and address an innovative hypothesis or critical barrier to progress in the field? Does the proposal develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools or technologies for this area?

Investigator: Is the applicant appropriately trained and well suited to carry out this proposal? Does the investigative team bring complementary and integrated backgrounds to the proposal (if applicable)? Does the applicant(s) have suitable experience in supervising students in research?

All applicants (excluding fellows) are to include a statement in the Personal Statement section of their biographical sketch that explicitly states how they contribute to a safe, inclusive, and diverse work environment. In addition, mentors on Fellowships, Career Development Awards, and Diversity Supplements should complete recognized training specific to sexual and gender-based harassment.

Environment: 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? Does the application demonstrate the likely availability of well-qualified students to participate in the project? Does the application provide sufficient evidence that students have in the past or are likely to pursue careers in the biomedical or behavioral investigation?