Application Deadline: Feb. 2, 2016
Award Activation: June 1, 2016

Applications must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. CT on the deadline date. The system will shut down at 5:00 p.m. CT. Early submission is encouraged. Your institutional Grants Officer (GO) has the final responsibility of submitting your completed application to the American Heart Association. It is important that you check with your GO for his/her internal deadline.

Program Description, Eligibility and Peer Review Criteria

Success Rate

Objectives

The student research program encourages promising students, including women and members of minority groups underrepresented in the sciences, from all disciplines to consider research careers while supporting the highest quality scientific investigation broadly related to cardiovascular disease and stroke. The research opportunity will allow students to work for 8, 10 or 12 weeks with a faculty/staff member on any project broadly related to cardiovascular disease/function or stroke. The goal is to encourage students to consider a future academic career in this area.

Science Focus

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

Disciplines

Proposals are encouraged from all disciplines, including multidisciplinary efforts, as well epidemiological, behavioral, community and clinical investigations that bear on cardiovascular and stroke problems.

Target Audience

This program is intended for full-time students who have not yet obtained an MD but are enrolled in an MD program, Healthcare professionals with doctoral degrees, Ph.D., D.O., D.D.S., Pharm.D. and D.V.M. (or equivalent) in an MD program who seek research training with a sponsor prior to embarking on a research career.

Sponsor

It is important for the medical student to receive wise counsel and direction from an established investigator interested in the conduct and progress of the research project during the research-training period. Each medical student must have a sponsor.

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).

- J-1 Visa -- exchange visitor
- E-3 Visa -- specialty occupation worker
- H1-B Visa -- temporary worker in a specialty occupation
- TN Visa - NAFTA professional
- O-1 Visa - temporary worker with extraordinary abilities in the sciences F-
- 1 Visa - student visa
- G-4 Visa – family member of employee of international organizations and NATO

Awardees must meet American Heart Association citizenship criteria throughout the duration of the award.

Applicants are not required to reside in the United States for any period of time before applying for American Heart Association funding.

Location of Work

The award may be completed at any accredited institution in California, Nevada, Utah, Alaska, Arizona, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, or Washington.

American Heart Association research awards are limited to non-profit institutions. Such institutions include medical, osteopathic and dental schools, veterinary schools, schools of public health, pharmacy schools, nursing schools, universities and colleges, public and voluntary hospitals and other non-profit institutions 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 the Veterans Administration employees.

Funding is prohibited for awards at non-U.S. institutions.

Program Structure

Awardee is required to give an oral presentation at the conclusion of his/her research experience at a roundtable discussion meeting as scheduled by the sponsor/institution.

Roundtables

What is this a Roundtable Discussion?

In August, towards the end of the summer program, Awardees present their summer work to an audience of their peers. Essentially, roundtables serve as the capstone course for the student's summer research experience. View more information about Roundtables.

Budget - Western States Affiliate

Trainee Stipend/Salary: Award recipients will receive a stipend of $600/week for the short-term research experience.

Stipends will be distributed by the institution.

Project Support: $500 (per awardee)

Indirect: The Western States Affiliate Student award does not allow indirect costs.

Project support funds may be used by the institution for supplies, publications, and/or other expenses associated with the

student's research experience (e.g. weekly meetings for students and sponsors, roundtable or poster sessions, etc.)

Award Amount: $4,800 - $7,200 for student stipend ($600/week)

Award Period for Student: 8, 10 or 12 weeks

Award Duration to the Institution: June through May

Grants are generally intended for summer work, but are not limited to this time period if another block of time is preferred.

Restrictions

- This award is not intended for individuals of faculty/staff rank.
- Awardee must devote a minimum of 75% full-time effort to research or activities directly related to their development into independent researchers, as opposed to patient care or teaching responsibilities.
- Student may participate in the research program at any time during medical school except before the first summer.
- An applicant may submit only one affiliate Medical Student Research Program application per deadline.
- The student cannot hold a comparable award as a source of supplementation.
- A lab can support only 2 student trainees at one time if they show that the projects are individualized and there will be sufficient time and personnel for supervision and sponsoring.
- Fellowships are not to support individuals while they are completing their course work or studying for their qualifying examination or for individuals who already have a science-based Ph.D.

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 to address these in your proposal. Each criterion will account for one-third of the overall score. Student (1/3), Sponsor and Environment (1/3) and Project (1/3).

Criterion 1 - Evaluation of the Student Investigator

Does the trainee have potential for a research career?

1. Are the trainee's career plans specified in the application?
2. Is this supported by the trainee's academic record and the assessment provided by the three letters of reference (one of which must be from the sponsor)?
3. Does the trainee have prior research experience and/or publications?
4. 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. Does the sponsor provide a comprehensive training plan that will facilitate the applicant's progress towards his/her research career goals?
5. Does the sponsor provide a description of the student selection and monitoring process?

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?

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.

   What are the specific goals of the project and are they achievable in the time frame proposed? What new skills or research techniques will the applicant learn during the course of the project?

   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?

Applicants should never contact reviewers regarding their applications. Discussing scientific 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.

Selection Process and Notification

The applications are submitted by the Medical Student applicant and his/her Grants Officer through Grants@Heart and assigned to the Student Peer Review Committee. After receiving the peer review results and deciding which applications to fund, the research committee notifies the applicant of the awarded research outcome.

Successful applicants and sponsors will be notified by e-mail.

Western States Affiliate Medical Student Research Program

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