



American
Heart
Association.

Guide for Strategic Awards

February 2026

American Heart Association MISSION STATEMENT

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

PREFACE

The American Heart Association congratulates you on your research award. It is a great source of pride to the Association that you have been selected as an Awardee. American Heart research awardees are an integral part of the organization with a long tradition of excellence both locally and nationally. Many opportunities exist for your continued involvement with the Association during and after the term of your Award.

This guide governs Strategic Awards. Please refer to this guide to answer the most asked questions about procedures and policies of Research Operations of the Association. Please note, the research operations practices outlined in this manual cover only Strategic Awards and Networks and may not apply to other foundational awards. Acceptance of the Association's policies is a requirement of accepting the award. An Awardee and Institution accept the award by signing the Association's Award Agreement. The Terms and Conditions of the Award Agreement are available [online](#).

This guide has been prepared to assist Center Directors / Coordinating Center PIs, Project Principal Investigators (Project PIs) and other authorized institutional officials with the specific terms and conditions applicable to the Heart Association's Strategic Awards and Network Awards. In accepting the award, the Center Director / Coordinating Center PI, Project PIs, and the Institution assume an obligation to expend award funds for the research purposes set forth in the application and in accordance with all regulations and policies governing the programs of the American Heart Association, Inc.

The Heart Association has an online grants management system, [ProposalCentral](#). The system is used to manage the application, peer review, and awards processes. It is accessible 24/7 from any location with internet connection. This secure site requires all users to have a username and password for access.

For system support, questions about registration, or technical issues, please contact ProposalCentral customer support hotline at 800-875-2562 (Toll-free U.S. and Canada), or +1 703-964-5840 (Direct Dial International) or by email at pcsupport@altum.com

An award is bound by the terms and conditions under which it was activated unless otherwise indicated by the American Heart Association. Requests for forms, policy information and additional inquiries may be directed to: StrategicAwards@heart.org. Our mailing address is:

American Heart Association, Inc.
Awards Administration
Division of Research Administration
7272 Greenville Avenue
Dallas, Texas 75231-4596
Home Page: <https://professional.heart.org>

Research pages: <https://professional.heart.org/researchpolicies>

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I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Strategic research awards provide the American Heart Association an opportunity to address key strategic issues as determined by the Board of Directors.

II. CONDITIONS FOR AWARD SUPPORT

A. CITIZENSHIP/VISA REQUIREMENTS

Award recipients must meet Association citizenship criteria throughout the duration of their awards including any authorized extension period. Awards are subject to termination if changes in citizenship/visa status no longer meet the requirements. It is the responsibility of the Awardee Institution (as the Sponsor or employer) to ensure legal verification of citizenship or visa status and compliance with Association policy.

1. Center Director / Coordinating Center PI

- U.S. citizen
- Permanent Resident
- Pending Permanent Resident (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 U.S., having filed an Application for Employment Form I-765)

2. Project Principal Investigator

- U.S. citizen
- Permanent Resident
- Pending Permanent Resident (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 U.S., having filed an Application for Employment Form I-765)
- H1-B Visa – temporary worker in a specialty occupation
- O-1 Visa – temporary worker with extraordinary abilities in the sciences
- TN Visa – NAFTA professional
- G-4 Visa – family member of employee of international organizations and NATO

3. Fellows

- U.S. citizen
- Permanent Resident
- Pending Permanent Resident (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 U.S., having filed an Application for Employment Form I-765)
- E-3 – Specialty Occupation Worker
- F-1 Visa – student
- G-4 Visa – family member of employee of internal organizations and NATO
- H1-B Visa – temporary worker in a specialty occupation
- J-1 Visa – exchange visitor
- O-1 Visa – temporary worker with extraordinary abilities in the sciences
- TN Visa – NAFTA professional

All awardees must meet the citizenship criteria throughout the duration of the award and provide any updated status as applicable.

B. ALTERNATIVE/OVERLAPPING FUNDING

The research projects described in the original application can have no scientific overlap with other funded work.

Alternative (pending or planned Applications) Funding

An application must be identified as alternative if submitted to more than one granting agency for the same or closely related project and/or in which there are duplicate budgetary requests.

Overlapping (active or approved Applications) Funding

An award must be identified as overlapping if it supports the same or closely related projects and/or in which there are duplicated budgetary requests. The applicant can accept the Association award only if he/she relinquishes the overlapping application.

In accepting an award from the Heart Association, the Center Director / Coordinating Center PI, Project PI and the Awardee Institution assume an obligation to expend Award funds for the research purposes set forth in the application and to affirm that there is no supplementary or duplicate funding for these purposes. The Center Director / Coordinating Center PI, Project PIs and Awardee Institution will promptly notify the Association of the activation of any award which provides alternative or overlapping support.

After an application is reviewed by the Association, the alternative designation of the project or the budget cannot be changed in order to accommodate any partial alternative funding. The applicant is not allowed to adjust the scientific aims or budget of a submitted application to accommodate any overlap resulting from funding of an alternative application by another funding agency. One hundred percent (100%) duplication between applications is not a requirement for an application to be deemed alternative or overlapping. The applicant can accept only one award if more than one is to be approved for funding. After award activation, if a subsequent funding agency eliminates all overlap (scientific and budgetary), the awardee may keep the Association award, pending review and approval by the Research Committee.

C. CONCURRENT AWARDS

Center Directors / Coordinating Center PI and Project PIs may hold another Association award simultaneously as long as there is no scientific or budgetary overlap between the two awards. A named Network fellow may not concurrently hold another Heart Association fellowship for the duration of their time as a named fellow at the association Network Center and/or Training Center.

D. SUBMISSION OF AWARD ACTIVATION FORMS

To activate an award, the Center Director / Coordinating Center PI, Project PIs and Awardee Institution(s) must provide the required documentation by the due dates set forth in the award letter. The Center Director / Coordinating Center PI is required to submit all the forms (Award Agreement, Animal Subject Use Form, Open Science Data Plan/Opt-Out and the Project budget). Project PIs are also required to submit these forms along with IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee) and/or IRB (Institutional Review Board) Regulatory Approval. The fellows are not required to submit any award activation forms. The Association will not activate an award until all the documentation has been received. (See section III Life Cycle of an AHA Award for more information)

E. MODIFICATION OF AWARD TERMS

The Heart Association reserves the right to modify the terms of its Award Agreement with 12-month written notice to the Awardee and the Institution.

F. POLICIES AND STANDARDS GOVERNING HEART ASSOCIATION RESEARCH AWARDS

The following link references all Policies and Standards Governing the Heart Association's Research Awards research policies applicable and enforceable for awardees.

<https://professional.heart.org/en/research-programs/awardee-resources/policies-governing-all-research-awards>

The following policies outline key procedures and requirements that apply to all of the association's research grant applicants and awardees; this is not a complete list of all policies.

- Harassment and Discrimination
- Open Science
 - Additional information regarding the Open Science Policies is also available at [Open Science Policy Statements for Funded Research](#).
- Intellectual Property
- Falsification of Scientific Data, Plagiarism, Use of Someone Else's Work or Idea and Scientific Misconduct
- Collection, Use, and Security of Personal Information
- Ethical Aspects of Research with Human Subjects and Animals

G. LIABILITY

The American Heart Association is not responsible for any claim, judgment, Award, damages, settlement, negligence or malpractice arising from the research or investigation related to this Award. The Institution acknowledges responsibility for the conduct of research or investigations related to this Award and releases the American Heart Association from all claims or liability that may arise from the conduct of research or investigations related to this Award resulting from any act or omission on the part of the Institution, its employees, agents or representatives.

H. INVESTIGATOR FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE POLICY/OBJECTIVITY IN RESEARCH

Investigators and Institutions are required by the American Heart Association to comply with the PHS regulations, Final Rule, 42 CFR Part 50, Subpart F, Responsibility of Applicants for Promoting Objectivity in Research. The intent is to ensure that the design, conduct, or reporting of research funded by the Association will not be biased by any conflicting financial interest of those investigators responsible for the research.

Submission of the Application to the Association indicates approval and compliance with the requirement that an institutional administrative process be in effect to identify and resolve conflicting financial interests of the type described in Subpart 50.605(a) with respect to all Research Projects for which funding is sought from the Association.

I. AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENT

All award recipients (e.g., Center Directors, Coordinating Center PIs, and Project Principal Investigators) must maintain an active Heart Association Professional Membership throughout the duration of the Award. If your membership has expired, please renew today, <https://professional.heart.org/en/partners>.

III. LIFE CYCLE OF AN AWARD

A. NOTICE OF AWARD

After funding decisions have been made, the Center Director / Coordinating Center PI will be contacted by either phone call or email, notifying him/her to log into [ProposalCentral](#) to see the outcome of his/her application review. The awardee can view the Award Letter on the outcomes page. The Award Letter is also available in Awards under Correspondence – Notes in [ProposalCentral](#).

The initial start date of the award is the earliest and the termination date is the latest that funds may be obligated or expended.

B. AWARD ACTIVATION FORMS

To activate an award, certain documentation must be received by the Association. All deliverables including the Award Agreement Form should be submitted electronically by the Center Director/ Coordinating Center PI and Project PIs through the [ProposalCentral](#) system within one month of award notification. The Award Agreement must be signed by all required parties and uploaded to ProposalCentral. The Heart Association staff will review the Award Agreement. A copy of your signed Agreement should be retained for the institution’s files, and a copy should be retained by the fiscal office.

Form	Purpose	Date due
Award Agreement Form	Contract between the Association, the Awardee and Awardee Institution	Due within 90 days of award notification.
Other Industry Funding	Identify any funding the investigator has received that was not included in the application	Due within 90 days of award notification.
Fellow Appointment Change Request (Including CV & documentation of Citizenship/Visa status)	Association review and approval of fellow credentials	Due within 30 days of proposing a fellow. The first fellow appointment must be finalized within 90 days of the award start date. Each subsequent fellow should begin on or near the award start date in the following years.
Animal Subject Use Form	Identify the subjects and sources used in the research	Due within 90 days of award notification.
Project Budget	Provides a detailed list of proposed project expenses	Due within 90 days of award notification.
IACUC and/or IRB Regulatory Approval	Approval of conducting animal or human subject research	Regulatory Approval and Informed Consent for human subject research are due within 90 days of award notification.
Bank Information* (Grants Officer is required to submit)	Provides information for sending award payments to the Institution.	Due within 60 days of award notification.
Open Data Plan/ Opt-Out Request	Confirm investigators data plan or opt-out request complies with Association policy	Due within 90 days of award notification.

*For tax reporting purposes, the Heart Association is required to collect each Institution’s Tax ID and filing status tax code.

Award Concerns

The Investigator or Awardee Institution may be asked to address Award concerns or contingencies as a condition of accepting the Award. These items must be adequately addressed by the Investigator

or Awardee Institution and resolved by the Association before Award payments will be made on the approved project. The policies and provisions as specified will be binding on you as an awardee.

C. RESTRICTED RESEARCH SUPPORT

The American Heart Association frequently receives research-restricted gifts from sources such as private foundations, professional societies, individual donors, or corporations interested in supporting projects of excellent scientific merit.

Awardees may be notified that their Association Award is funded by a research-restricted donation. Awardees whose projects are selected for such funding will be contacted directly by Association staff to review the guidelines associated with such Awards. The specific guidelines that govern these Awards will be communicated in writing to the Awardee and are summarized below.

The following guidelines apply to Awards selected to be funded with research-restricted dollars.

- If co-funded by a donor-restricted gift, the Awardee may be designated as an American Heart Association-(name of donor) (name of funding mechanism) Awardee, or similar naming convention.
- Acknowledgment of American Heart Association-(name of donor) support in any publication or presentation resulting from this Award should follow the specific attribution language in the Association's award agreement terms and conditions. The Association will provide specific wording in the instance of donor-restricted funding.
- Awardees may be provided with an opportunity to meet with donor representatives, as deemed appropriate and beneficial.
- Upon request, the donor may be provided with an abstract of the funded application and summaries of progress, which may be circulated internally upon receipt of appropriate confidentiality assurances.
- The donor and/or funding organization may publish the Awardee's name, Project title and institutional affiliation except in purchased media advertising.

D. LOCATION OF WORK

Association research Awards must be 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 with the exception of the Veterans Administration employees. The Heart Association will scrutinize the available resources as they relate to local, state or national needs.

Awards for research to be performed outside the United States are limited to Principal Investigators who are United States citizens.

Awardees, who are U.S. citizens, may request approval to temporarily conduct work in foreign countries (e.g., outside US, Canada and Mexico) with Award funds to be administered through the Principal Investigator's sponsoring US Institution.

E. PERCENTAGE EFFORT

SFRN Awards

There is a 20% minimum effort requirement for the Center Director, 5% minimum effort requirement for the Training Director (if applicable), and a 10% minimum effort requirement for Project PIs of Center projects. Director and Project PI salary requested must be proportional to the percent effort devoted to the Center.

Named fellows of the Centers at U.S. institutions must commit 75% effort to research training. Center fellows may commit a minimum of 70% effort if justification is accepted by the Oversight Advisory Committee.

HERN Awards

There is a 10% minimum effort requirement for the Coordinating Center PI and a 10% minimum effort requirement for Project PIs. Director and Project PI salary requested must be proportional to the percent effort devoted to the Center.

Strategic Awards

Refer to the RFP for other Strategic Award requirements regarding PIs, fellows and/or trainees.

F. PAYMENT METHOD

The Association currently pays research awards quarterly by direct deposit the month following the end of the quarter. For example, the award payment for the quarter April 1 to June 30, will be the following month, July. Payments are transferred on or around the third Tuesday of the month in January, April, July, and October.

Payments will be placed on hold for delinquent reports and/or deliverables, or if the Center is out of compliance with the Guidelines. Payments will be reinstated as soon as any issues are resolved. Payments on continuing grants and the final payment (or some lesser amount) for terminating awards will be withheld if scientific reports or expenditures reports have not been received by the due date. All award payments withheld revert to the Association if all reports and/or deliverables have not been received six months after the award period ends.

Institutions are required to provide complete bank information to ensure payments. To avoid delays in receiving award payments, institutions should request an update or revision to their bank information promptly if there are changes. Requests for updates may be done by submitting an Award change request for bank information in [ProposalCentral](#).

The Heart Association reserves the right to revise its payment schedule, as it deems necessary, at any time. Awardees and associated Institutions will be notified in advance of any changes to the schedule.

SFRN Awards

All payments are made to the Center Institution/Sponsoring Institution. The Center Institution is responsible for distributing funds to Project Institutions, according to executed subcontracts.

HERN Awards

Each sponsoring institution in the Network will receive payments directly from the American Heart Association.

G. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The awarded institution will maintain fiscal responsibility. The appropriate Grants/Sponsored Programs Officer and/or Institutional Officer are required to sign off on submitted reports.

Scientific Reports — Each investigator (e.g., Center Director, Coordinating Center PI and Project PI) is required to submit a scientific report annually. An annual request for the submission of the Progress Reports will be sent by [ProposalCentral](#) 30 days prior to the deadline. The reports will be due at the end of each annual award period.

Expenditures Reports — Each investigator (e.g., Center Director, Coordinating Center PI and Project PI) and the designated Fiscal Officer are required to submit expenditures report annually for the duration of the award and at the end of any approved no-cost extension. An annual request for the submission of the expenditures Reports will be sent 90 days prior to the deadline. The reports will be due no later than 90 days after the end of each annual award period.

If a scientific or expenditures report is not submitted by the due date, subsequent payments will be withheld until the report is submitted. [ProposalCentral](#) will send a monthly reminder to the individuals responsible for submitting the report.

Recruitment Reports – For projects that have received regulatory approval and have started recruiting participants, Quarterly Recruitment & Retention Reports will be due in March, June, September, and December of each award year. The reports will be completed using a template provided by the Heart Association. Reminder emails will be sent 30 days prior to the due date.

Invention Disclosures – The report submitted to the Heart Association should be the initial copy of the Institution's Invention disclosure form (and any subsequent versions that have substantive changes or additional information) which details any Inventions that may have been disclosed to an Awardee Institution. The report should be submitted to the Association annually by the Technology Transfer Officer and within 60 days of the date the Invention is disclosed and prior to any public disclosure.

Open Science Policy Statements for the Association Funded Research

The following link references policies related to Public Access, Open Data, Compliance Threshold, Opt-Out Conditions, Data Types, Acceptable Repositories, Preregistration, Preprints, Material Transfer Agreements: <https://professional.heart.org/en/research-programs/awardee-resources/open-science-policy-statements-for-aha-funded-research>

Open Science deliverable and reporting requirements:

Open Science Data Plan or Opt-Out Request: The Heart Association requires a data plan, or an opt-out request, be submitted as part of the proposal and maintained by awardees throughout the duration of the award.

Data Deposit Confirmation: The Association requires that the Principal Investigator submit this no later than the time of an associated publication or the end of the award period (and any no-cost extension, whichever comes first).

Award payments will be withheld if these reports are not received by their respective due dates. In addition, the final payment (or some lesser amount determined by the Association) of the Award may be withheld until all reports have been received by the Association. All award payments withheld revert to the Association if all reports and/or deliverables have not been received six months after the award period ends.

H. TITLE TO EQUIPMENT

Title to equipment purchased with award funds shall be vested in the Institution where the Project PI is conducting the research project with the explicit understanding that such equipment is for use by the Project PI during the term of the award, which includes any authorized extension.

If the Association approves the transfer of an award to another institution, equipment purchased with Association funds will be transferred, and title vested in the new institution for the specific use by the designated Project PI. Permanent vesting will be in the institution upon award completion or termination.

I. INTERRUPTION OF AWARD

During the term of the award, it may become necessary or desirable for the awardee to interrupt the work on the award. Several provisions for interruption of the award exist.

Vacation — If it is not in conflict with the Institution's policy, a 30-day vacation is allowed during each year of the award.

Absence from work — Awardees must promptly notify the Association of any absence from the Center and/or Research Project longer than 60 days, planned, unplanned or due to illness. In certain extreme cases when the awardee is unable to communicate with the Association due to illness or accident, the Department Chairperson may submit the request on the awardee's behalf. The award is subject to early termination unless the absence has been requested and authorized in advance by the Association.

A written request should be submitted, indicating the dates of the leave, the reasons for the request and the Investigator's intention to resume the research project. The Association will review the request and determine the most appropriate course of action. The researcher and/or Department Chairperson will be notified of the disposition of the request.

Working leave of absence — An awardee may find that research progress is promoted or enhanced by spending a portion of the award period in another institution in this country or abroad. If the opportunity should present itself, the reasons, and expectations for such a leave should be documented in the request for a working leave of absence as follows:

- a letter from the Center Director / Coordinating Center PI and/or Project PI indicating how the proposed experience will enhance the current project or research career; place and dates involved; and facilities to be made available.
- a letter of concurrence from the investigator's department chair, indicating institutional financial support during the working leave, and assurance that the investigator will return in rank to the Sponsor Institution.
- a copy of the letter of invitation from the host scientist confirming the length of time, facilities to be made available, and the Research Plan.

Working leaves of absence may not exceed 12 months in duration.

Escrow — In very limited circumstances, the Project PI may request that an award remain active, yet have the payments placed on hold for a period of time.

For occasions such as family and medical leave or authorized military leave, the Center Director / Coordinating Center PI and/or Project PI may request that award funds be temporarily held in an escrow account. A suspension of an award already in progress may be requested. Eligible circumstances include:

- serious illness of the Center Director / Coordinating Center PI or Project PI,
- situations where an employee (i.e., Project PI) might take a period of family or medical leave from an employer (i.e., Institution), such as maternity or adoption leave, leave of absence to care for an immediate family member who is seriously ill or disabled, or
- authorized military leave.

These periods for holding award funds in “escrow” are limited to 12 months.

Requests for placing award funds in escrow must be submitted to the American Heart Association in writing by the Center Director / Coordinating Center PI and/or Project PI. The request must be authorized by both the department head and the appropriate institutional officer. A copy of the Family and Medical Leave request and approval from the Institution must be submitted, if applicable.

The Association will review the request, and a notice of disposition will be provided to the Center Director/ Coordinating Center PI and/or Project PI. The investigator will be expected to share the escrow disposition notice with the appropriate institutional officers. If an escrow is approved, it will be available in six months’ increments. A maximum of two consecutive six-month increments may be requested during the term of the Award.

All requests are subject to review by Association staff. The outcome of the request will be communicated to the Awardee. If the request is approved, all payments for the award will be suspended until the escrow period is terminated and the Project PI resumes active research on the project.

J. REQUESTING CHANGES TO AWARD

Requesting a change to an Award requires the submission of a Change Request and/or specific Deliverable Type Request and should be submitted from the Awards Deliverable Dashboard in [ProposalCentral](#).

Requests will be reviewed by Association staff, and an Advisory Committee will provide external oversight in an advisory capacity to the Strategic Awards.

1. Change of Principal Investigator — A change of Center Director / Coordinating Center PI is not allowed during the term of the award period. Exceptions to this are allowed only for extreme circumstances (e.g., severe illness, disability, or death). In very limited circumstances the Association and the OAC will consider a permanent change of Project PI. The following documents must be submitted at least 60 days prior to the proposed change:
 - A letter from the Center Director / Coordinating Center PI and Project PI indicating the reason for the change, the effective date of the change, how the research project will be altered, if at all, and a statement of the proposed Project PI’s current role and activities in the center research project
 - The department chairperson should indicate concurrence by signing the above letter of request or by submitting a separate letter.

- A letter from the proposed Project PI indicates willingness to accept responsibility for pursuance of the research project. A current curriculum vitae and bibliography must accompany this letter.

The request to change Project PI will be reviewed by the OAC. If the change is not approved, the Award will terminate on the date the original Project PI ceases to work on the Project.

A change of Project PI is not allowed during an extension year of the Award. A temporary change of Project PI is not allowed at any time during the Award Period.

2. Change of Training Director (if applicable) - In very limited circumstances the Association and OAC will consider a permanent change of Training Director. The following documents must be submitted at least 60 days prior to the proposed change:

- A letter from the Center Director indicating the reason for the change, the effective date of the change, how the training program will be altered, if at all, and a statement of the proposed Training Director's current role and activities in the center or the institution's mentoring program.
- The department chairperson should indicate concurrence by signing the above letter of request or by submitting a separate letter.
- A letter from the proposed Training Director indicating willingness to accept responsibility for pursuance of the training program. A current curriculum vitae must accompany this letter.

The request to change the Training Director will be reviewed by Association staff and the OAC. If the change is not approved, the center must provide an alternate candidate.

A change of Training Director is not allowed during an extension year of the Award. A temporary change of Training Director is not allowed at any time during the Award Period.

3. Change of location for Center Director - If the Center Director transitions employment to an institution other than the originally funded Center institution, he/she must continue to fulfill the required 20% effort and maintain full responsibility for the Center throughout the duration of the award.

The following documentation must be submitted at least 60 days prior to the proposed transition:

- Letter from the Center Director: This letter should outline the reason for the transfer, the effective date of the change, and a clear plan for how the Center Director will continue to meet the responsibilities of the role from the new institution. Concurrence must be indicated either through co-signatures from the current department chairperson and Fiscal Officer, or through separate letters from each, documenting that the original sponsoring institution will continue to sponsor the contracted award through the end of the award term.
- Letters of approval from the new institution: These should include confirmation from the new institution's department chairperson that adequate facilities and support will be provided, along with the institution's commitment to provide 20% of the center director's time to the original award. A co-signature from the Fiscal Officer of the new institution is also required.

The request to change of location for the Center Director will be reviewed by Association staff and the OAC.

4. Change of location of Award (institutional transfer) - Centers are not transferable to another institution. If a Project PI needs to transfer to a new institution, a request must be made in writing prior to the transfer. The transfer must be approved in advance by the Association and the OAC. The effective date of the transfer should be the first of the month.

Project PI should submit all the following materials at least 60 days prior to the proposed transfer:

- A letter of request outlining the reasons for the transfer and indicating how the move will alter the Investigator's Research Plans, if at all. Concurrence should be indicated by the co-signatures of the present department chairperson and Fiscal Officer, or each can send separate letters.
- Letters of approval from the proposed new institution's department chairperson indicating that adequate facilities and assistance will be provided, as well as maintaining the minimum 10% effort of the PI, and willingness of the Institution to administer the Award; a co-signature of the Fiscal Officer of that Institution should be obtained.
- Institutional assurances are required:

If the research involves the use of human subjects, the following must be provided:

- documentation of proof of endorsement of the investigations by the committee on clinical investigation, or other clearly designated appropriate body of the Institution; and,
- an assurance that any research involving human subjects will conform ethically with the guidelines prescribed by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) including the provision of suitable explanation to human subjects or their guardians concerning experimental design and all significant hazards, so that they may be in a position to provide appropriate informed consent prior to the investigations; and,
- a copy of the consent form to be provided to human subjects if it differs from the one submitted with the original Application.

If the research involves the use of animals, the following must be provided:

- documentation of proof of the Institution's unqualified Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International, (AAALAC) accreditation OR U.S. Public Health Service Animal Welfare Assurance Identification Number; and
- a copy of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval of the Project.

If the research involves the use of biohazards, the following must be provided:

- documentation that the research Protocol has been reviewed and approved by the Institution's biohazards committee, and
- documentation that the research Protocol conforms to NIH guidelines.

If the Principal Investigator is not able to provide the appropriate assurances with respect to the use of human subjects, animals or biohazards, transfer to that Institution will not be approved.

The OAC will review the request, and a notice of disposition will be sent to the Principal Investigator, Fiscal Officer, and department chairperson at the current Institution and, if the transfer is approved, the notice of disposition will also be provided to the Fiscal Officer and department chairperson at the new Institution.

A change of location will not be permitted during an extension year.

5. Change of location of Award (departmental transfer) — Transfer of a research project to another department within the Project PI's Institution requires prior approval by the Association. The effective date of the transfer should be the first of the month.

Project PI should submit all the following material to the Heart Association at least 60 days prior to the proposed transfer:

- Letter of Request outlining the reasons for the transfer and indicating how the move will alter the research plans, if at all. Concurrence should be indicated by the co-signature of the present department chairperson.
- Letters of Approval from the proposed department chair indicating that adequate facilities and assistance will be provided, as well as willingness of the Institution to administer the Award; a co-signature of the Fiscal Officer should be obtained only if the Fiscal Officer will change.

The Association will review the request, and a notice of disposition will be sent to the Project PI, Fiscal Officer, and department chairperson.

6. Change of Project design — Although Awards are made based on specific research Proposals, strict adherence to the proposed outlines is not demanded. In fact, the Association encourages modification in design of Projects as new research opportunities develop. One of the primary goals of the Association's research program is to encourage and protect the academic and scientific freedom of its funded investigators. However, the Association must be notified of major changes in the direction or content of the original research Proposal.
7. Change of Department Chairperson or Fiscal Officer — The Awardee must inform the Association if there is a change of department chairperson and/or Fiscal Officer by submitting a deliverable within the award record in Proposal Central to request a change in personnel. The new chairperson and/or Fiscal Officer should upload a letter to the deliverable indicating willingness to assume administrative and/or fiscal support for the Award. If the new department chair or Fiscal Officer is not able or willing to provide such support, the Awardee should contact the StrategicAwards@heart.org to discuss appropriate options.

K. RESEARCH OUTPUTS

Since Awards are made possible through voluntary contributions by the public, research results of all Association Awards should be made available to the public promptly either by presentation before scientific societies or by publication in scientific journals. The American Heart Association also encourages use of preprint servers. This allows for rapid communication of new findings and can benefit the research community and the public by accelerating the pace of discovery.

When completed, the results of research should be made freely available through their submission for publication in sufficient detail to allow a reader to repeat or to alter the procedure used.

Awardees are encouraged to report to the public on both the nature and objectives of their work, as well as on actual results. It is the responsibility of the Awardee, the sponsor and the Institution to ensure that Association support is properly acknowledged in all references to research outputs (including but not limited to oral or poster presentations, news releases, interviews, publications, data, code, preprints, preregistration, blogs, and podcasts) resulting from work carried out during the tenure of their Award. To enable the accurate evaluation of outcomes from Association research investments, it is critical that acknowledgements mention The American Heart Association as the funding organization, as well as the specific grant ID number or grant DOI and the names of each author supported by each Award. The recommended format follows:

"THIS WORK WAS SUPPORTED BY AN AWARD FROM THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION GRANT # (OR GRANT DOI)_____ / AWARDEE NAME / AWARD YEAR."

The full award ID must be included. If more than one Association award supported the published research, then each Award should be cited separately with the Award ID or the grant DOI and name(s) of supported authors. The American Heart Association requires funded Clinical Trials to publish their Trial ID in all publications resulting from the work.

L. RESEARCH PUBLICITY

Public understanding and support of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular research requires continuous reporting of the nature, objectives, and results of investigative work. Investigators are urged to cooperate in such reporting. It is understood, however, that although such reporting is voluntary, it must conform to policies and procedures approved by the Association. The following principles and procedures are followed in publicizing investigators and studies supported through the Association's research program.

1. **Principal Investigator Approval**
All publicity must have advanced approval of the awardee and the Association. Premature release of research results can be misleading.
2. **Timing of Release**
The results of an awardee's work shall not be released for publication in the mass media before results have been published in a scientific journal or presented by the awardee at an appropriate scientific meeting.
3. **Method of Release**
All publicity on Association sponsored research should be released to the mass media through the Association. The media may interview the awardee, who is free to answer such inquiries, but the Awardee is advised to do so subject to the condition stated in the timing section above. In all instances, the awardee must advise the Association of his or her communications with the media.

M. EARLY TERMINATION OR RESIGNATION OF AWARD

1. **By the Awardee** — An award may be terminated at any time upon written notification to the Heart Association. A final Expenditures Report must be submitted with a check for any free and unobligated balance as soon after Award termination as possible. If monies are due to the Institution, payment will be made after the final Scientific Report has been submitted by the Center Director / Coordinating Center PI and/or Project PI and the final Expenditures Report has been approved by Association staff.

2. By the Association — An award may be terminated at any time within the project period because:
 - a. the Awardee has not complied with the terms and conditions of the award, as stated in the Award Agreement Form or this guide,
 - b. a change requested by the Center Director / Coordinating Center PI or Project PI was not approved (for example, a change of Project PI or a change of location of the award/institutional transfer),
 - c. of awardee action that is inconsistent with the stated objectives of the program,
 - d. of inadequate scientific progress by the investigator
 - e. of an unapproved leave of absence.

Upon notification by the Association of termination, a final Expenditures Report must be submitted with a check for any free and unobligated balance, as well as a Scientific Report of the work accomplished to date.

IV. EXPENDITURE OF AWARD FUNDS

A. EXPENDITURES AND OBLIGATIONS

Expenditures and obligations must be made during the award year for which funds are allocated by the Association. Expenditures are considered monies paid out during the award period.

Obligations include all commitments and liabilities entered into but not paid for during the award period (based on purchase orders, invoices, or other evidence of liability consistent with accounting and purchasing procedures of the Awardee Institution).

B. ACCOUNTING

Financial administration of an award should be in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Supporting records of award expenditures must be in sufficient detail to clearly indicate the nature of expenditures. The Financial Officer of the Institution agrees to make accounting records of disbursements available to the Association upon due notice.

C. AUDIT

The Association may make periodic fiscal audits to determine that:

- accounting and fiscal procedures followed by the awardee Institution provide safeguards for receipt and expenditure of award funds,
- reported expenditures from awards comply with the fiscal policies of the Association,
- proper control is maintained over equipment purchased from award funds and
- award fund balances are accorded with the proper disposition.

D. REDUCTION OF AWARD AMOUNT

Awards may be reduced at the time of peer review of the application. If the project support portion of the budget was reduced, and the reduction lowers the project support levels below the minimum

requirements, the Association will revise project support budget resulting in the maintenance of the required minimum of project support. Funds will be re-budgeted from Project PI's salary category to project support. The Heart Association reserves the right to reduce the award amount during the term of the award.

E. INDIRECT COSTS

Indirect costs (also referred to as Facilities and Administrative or F&A costs) are real costs incurred by the Institution in support of Sponsored activities but cannot be directly identified with a specific Award or contract. If allowed by the program, institutional indirect costs for operating expenses may be charged at up to ten percent (10%) of total annual expenditures on Awards at the Awardee institution. Any subcontract awardee institution (if applicable) is allowed institutional indirect costs up to ten percent (10%) of the total expenditures of the subcontract. The Awardee institution may not charge indirect costs on the direct costs of a subcontract.

F. REBUDGETING OF FUNDS

Funds may be re-budgeted between approved categories of the budget to enable an awardee maximum flexibility in conducting a project. Such changes must be within established limits for specific category.

Prior authorization is required for re-budgeting the following items:

- Re-budgeting of grant funds for the purchase of a piece of equipment totaling more than 25% (or \$10,000 whichever is the lesser of the two amounts) of the annual project support budget.
- Re-budgeting from one project to another.

Expenditures and obligations are limited to the amount awarded for each fiscal period. All other re-budgeting must be consistent with the allowable amounts for salary and project support. Deficit balances are not allowed.

G. ALLOWABLE AND NON-ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURES (TABLE)

If an expense is not specifically indicated in the table, please contact StrategicAwards@heart.org.

CATEGORY OF EXPENSE	ALLOWABLE ON AWARDS
Alterations and Renovations	Only if essential, prior approval is required
Books, Subscriptions	No
SFRN Center Director Salary/Fringe	Yes, up to \$50,000 per year
Co-Investigator, Co-PI, Collaborating Investigator Salary/Fringes	Yes, to be taken from Project Budgets
Computers	Yes
Consultative Services	May be requested prior to payment of said consultant.
Dependent Care	Yes, up to \$2,000 per year as described below
Equipment	Yes, prior approval required for over 25% (or \$10,000, whichever is the lesser amount) of the annual project support.
Expenses in Obtaining or Maintaining a Visa	No
Honoraria Policy	No
Indirect Costs	Up to 10% of total annual expenditures.
Malpractice Insurance	No

Membership Dues	Only American Heart Association membership dues are allowed.
Other Personnel Salary/Fringes	Yes, however, personnel with doctorate degrees not listed on the initial budget or original application must be approved by the OAC.
Overhead (Postage, Rent, Lights, Office Furniture, Telephone, etc.)	See Indirect Costs
Parking Fees	May be requested in writing prior to payment for research participants and/or research personnel that are required to travel between study sites to complete recruitment and/or study visits.
Patient Care, Hospitalization, Diagnostic Laboratory Tests	No
Participant Transportation	May be requested prior to payment.
Payment of Human Subjects / Participants	May be requested prior to payment.
Personnel Recruitment	No
Postage — Overnight Mail related to project	Yes, the name of the carrier used should be listed on the financial report.
Project PI Salary/Fringes	Yes, commensurate with percent effort devoted to the project.
Publication Costs and Reprints	Yes
Receptions and Meals	May be requested prior to payment. Heart Association approval is required for reasonable and customary expenses associated specifically with work related to the project.
Scientific Meetings Abroad	Yes, with prior approval
Service Contracts	Yes
Subcontracts	May be requested.
Supplies	Yes
Telephone — Long Distance related to project	Yes, it must be listed as Long Distance on the expenditures report.
SFRN Training Director Salary/Fringes	If applicable, to be taken from the \$50K allowed for Center Director
Travel — Domestic or Foreign	Yes, including travel to an Association Semi-Annual Meeting(s) and Annual Meeting(s).
Tuition Costs	No
Uniforms, Wearing Apparel	No

H. DESCRIPTION OF ALLOWABLE AND NON-ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURES

1. Alterations and Renovations

Use of grant funds may be requested for limited laboratory alterations or renovation of existing facilities, but only when essential to the proposed research project. The principal investigator must submit a written request/justification for alterations and/or renovation and the approximate cost. The Research Committee will review the request and a notice of disposition on the request will be sent to the principal investigator.

2. Books and Subscriptions

The purchase of books and subscriptions to journals cannot be made with grant funds.

3. **SFRN Center Director Salary/Fringe**
SFRN Center Directors may receive salary and fringe from the award up to \$50,000 per award year. If the Center Director is also the PI on one of the research projects, he/she may receive salary/fringe from the project as well. The Center Director may also serve as the Training Director. If an individual other than the Center Director serves as the Training Director, this \$50,000 per year limit remains, and the available funds should be allocated as appropriate to cover the efforts of these individuals.
4. **Co-Investigator, Co-PI, Collaborating Investigator Salary/Fringes**
Co-Investigators, Co-PIs, Collaborating Investigators, and other participants with faculty appointments may receive personal salary from the award with prior approval. The funds for salary must be allocated from the Project Budgets.
5. **Computers**
Computer purchases are permitted over the term of the award per project. Purchases of more than \$5,000 will require the inclusion of a detailed budget justification. The principal investigator must submit a written request/justification for the purchase of the computer/software and the approximate cost. The Association staff will review the request, and a notice of disposition will be sent to the principal investigator.
6. **Consultative Services**
Specialized consultative services from individuals may be requested. Individuals with or without doctoral degrees may be employed as consultants on a part-time basis when the project clearly requires these special services. The principal investigator must submit a written request/justification for the use of the services and the approximate cost. Association staff will review the request, and a notice of disposition will be sent to the awardee.
7. **Dependent Care**
Eligible expenses may be reimbursed up to \$2,000 per year. These costs should not be paid directly to the awardee; instead, the awardee must coordinate with their funded institution to request reimbursement through the institution's standard process, using funds from the award. Eligible dependents include children under 18, adults with disabilities requiring care, and elderly family members who depend on the awardee for daily support.

These must be directly related to the awardee's participation in professional activities (e.g., conferences, meetings, training) and not part of routine dependent care. Examples include:

- Caregiving services at a conference site while the awardee attends a scientific meeting.
- Travel expenses of a child/dependent to a conference site with a grantee who will be attending a scientific meeting.
- Travel expenses for a caregiver to accompany a child/dependent to a conference site with an awardee who will be attending a scientific meeting.
- Caregiving costs at home are incurred while the awardee travels that are not part of the standard care received by the dependent, such as overnight care for a dependent when a grantee is a single parent.

To ensure compliance and fiscal responsibility, expenses unrelated to professional obligations—such as routine care, education, entertainment, or travel upgrades—are not reimbursable and are prohibited.

8. **Equipment**
Equipment is defined as an item which has a primary function related to the research project and will ordinarily have a usable life expectancy of over one year, costing \$100 or more (office

furniture, typewriters, word processors, etc., are not considered to have primary function to the research project). Equipment purchases must be made clearly indicating that Project PI will use such equipment for at least six months during the grant period, which includes any authorized extension period.

Purchase of a piece of equipment where costs exceed twenty-five percent (25%) or \$10K (whichever is the lesser amount) of the budgeted project support in any fiscal year requires prior approval. The Project PI must submit a written request/justification for the purchase of the equipment and the approximate cost. This request should be co-signed by the Center Director / Coordinating Center PI and the Financial / Fiscal Officer at the institution. Association staff will review the request and a notice of disposition on the request will be sent to the principal investigator.

9. Expenses in Obtaining or Maintaining a Visa
Expenses associated with obtaining or maintaining a temporary or permanent visa for personnel to work on the grant are prohibited.
10. Honoraria Policy
Honorariums for awards are not permitted.
11. Indirect Costs
Indirect costs (also referred to as Facilities and Administrative or F&A costs) are real costs incurred by the Institution in support of Sponsored activities but cannot be directly identified with a specific Award or contract. Institutional indirect costs for physical plant costs may be charged up to ten percent (10%) of the total expenditures each year on awards. Indirect cost charges are for the use of the Awardee Institution and may be taken only at the time when an amount is properly charged to the award.
12. Malpractice Insurance
The premiums for malpractice insurance are not permitted.
13. Membership Dues
Awardees are allowed to pay the Heart Association professional membership dues. Membership dues to other organizations are prohibited.
14. Other Personnel Salary/Fringes
Professional and nonprofessional personnel with or without doctorate degrees may be budgeted (including fringe benefits at the institutional rate). Advance approval is required for personnel with doctoral degrees. Total amounts and percentage of time will be monitored for appropriateness to the project.

If postdoctoral personnel salary/fringes were budgeted but not named in the original application, a curriculum vitae and bibliography of the individual must be submitted within 30 days of proposing the individual.

Personnel with faculty appointments may receive personal salary from the award with prior approval. If approved, the funds must be allocated from the amount available for Project PI salary and fringe. A 5-page biosketch of the individual must be submitted to Heart Association.

15. Overhead
Overhead, also referred to as indirect costs, may be charged up to ten percent (10%) of the total expenditure each year. Charges for standard postage meter, rental of office or laboratory space, furniture and other routine expenses are not permitted to be charged separately to the grant.

16. **Parking Fees**
Association policy prohibits use of grant funds for parking fees for award personnel. However, parking fees can be requested to reimburse human subjects enrolled in a research project and/or research personnel that are required to travel between study sites to complete recruitment and/or study visits. Association staff will review the request and a notice of disposition on the request will be sent to the principal investigator.
17. **Patient Care, Hospitalization, Diagnostic Laboratory Tests**
Association policy prohibits use of grant funds for services paid on a fee basis, such as diagnosis, medical and surgical treatment, laboratory studies, hospitalization, drugs, or related services when those services are primarily for clinical care and not uniquely in support of the research project.
18. **Participant Transportation**
The cost of transporting participants to laboratories for special investigative tests may be requested. The principal investigator must submit a written request/justification for the payment of the participant transportation and the approximate cost. Association staff will review the request, and a notice of disposition will be sent to the principal investigator.
19. **Payment of Human Subjects**
Unbudgeted expenditures for payment of human subjects may be requested. The request must give the unit cost per subject and the procedure to be used, and the investigator should submit a copy of the approved consent form for use in the investigation. Association staff will review the request and a notice of disposition on the request will be sent to the principal investigator.
20. **Personnel Recruitment**
The cost of advertising to recruit personnel for a research project is prohibited.
21. **Postage — Overnight Mail**
Overnight mail charges directly related to the project are permitted. These items should be identified on the expenditures report as "overnight mail" or by listed the carrier used – e.g., FedEx.
22. **Principal Investigator Salary/Fringes**
Project PI salary/fringes must be consistent with the percent of investigator's total effort devoted to the research project, within specified limits.

SFRN Awards: Award policies allow some salary and fringe benefits for the SFRN Center Director and Project PI to be budgeted. The Center Director salary/fringe is limited to \$50K direct cost per year.
23. **Publication Costs and Reprints**
Reasonable expenditures in connection with publication of results of research, including research information services and library services, and for purchase of reprints are acceptable charges during the term of the grant, which includes any authorized extension period.
24. **Receptions and Meals**
The costs of receptions and/or meals may be requested prior to payment. Heart Association approval is required for reasonable and customary expenses associated specifically with work related to the project or scientific Semi-Annual and Annual Meetings.

25. Scientific Meetings Abroad

Costs of registration, travel, and attendance at scientific meetings in foreign countries are allowed but will require detailed budget justification.

26. Service Contracts

The cost-of-service contracts for maintenance of equipment is limited to the term of the grant or the approved extension period. Charges under a service contract should be reported for each applicable fiscal period.

27. Subcontracts

If a subcontract arises between the Center institution and an outside entity, the Director must notify StrategicAwards@heart.org immediately. A copy of the subcontract should be forwarded to the Association for review and appropriateness. Once all parties have agreed to the subcontract, a signed copy should be forwarded for reference. The expenses associated with a subcontract must be approved. If the subcontracting entity takes 10% Indirect Costs as a portion of the subcontract, the Center institution cannot take an additional 10% on top of these indirect costs.

Awardees and their sponsoring institution are responsible for the administration and management of their subcontract agreements. The Association will not mediate or intervene in any issues or disputes arising between the parties involved in the subcontract.

SFRN Center

Payments for the SFRN Awards are scheduled and paid directly to the funded Center institution. The Center is responsible for distributing funds to the Projects. If the Project institution is different from the Center institution, the Center Director must execute a subcontract, and the associated expenses must be approved by the Association. It is recommended that the subcontract be initiated at the start of the award to avoid potential delays of payments between the Center institution and Project institution. Once all parties have executed the subcontract, a signed copy should be forwarded to the Association for reference.

Each Project will have a separate award ID and will have access to manage required deliverables, reporting, etc., but will not receive direct payment. Project PIs are responsible for reporting on their progress and expenditures for their individual projects. Association staff will review and provide a summary report (e.g., actionable items, etc.,) on the Center and Project expenditure reports.

The Center institution will be responsible for oversight of the Center and Project expenditure reports. It is the responsibility of the Center institution to provide a combined carryover request and/or no-cost extension request for the Center and all Projects using provided templates and send directly to the Strategic Awards Manager via email.

28. Supplies

In general, supplies are items which are consumable, expendable or of low unit cost, and are directly related to the functioning of the research project. The following are examples: chemicals, glassware, small pieces of equipment costing less than \$100, etc.

29. Telephone — Long Distance

Long Distance charges directly related to the project are permitted.

30. SFRN Training Director Salary/Fringes

Training Directors may receive personal salary from the award with prior approval. A maximum of \$50,000 per year to cover effort associated with Center Leadership (i.e., Center Director, which

requires 20% effort and Training Director (when applicable), which requires 5% effort). The Center Director may also serve as the Training Director. If an individual other than the Center Director serves as the Training Director, this \$50,000 per year limit remains, and the available funds should be allocated as appropriate to cover the efforts of these individuals.

31. Travel — Domestic or Foreign

Travel expenditures may not conflict with existing policies of the Awardee Institution. Use of travel funds is not confined to the Principal Investigator and may be utilized by other personnel involved in the Research Project. Funds may be used to cover the cost of registration for scientific meetings (domestic or foreign), transportation, meals, and lodging.

Semi-Annual and Annual Meetings

The purpose of semi-annual meetings is to share results across the network and identify and act on potential collaborative opportunities. A major component of the Centers will be their ability to implement a successful program for the interdisciplinary training of a new generation of scientists and to collaborate. All key Center personnel (Center Director / Coordinating Center PI, Training Director, Project PIs and Fellows) will be expected to attend both the Semi-Annual and Annual Meetings.

Centers may use award dollars to pay for travel to two required face-to-face (as feasible), network-wide meetings and other meetings where research is presented. The Heart Association will only host an annual meeting in the Fall for all active Strategic Networks.

It is anticipated that the awarded Centers will host the semi-annual meeting on a rotating basis each Spring for their Network. Hosting refers to who will pay, organize the meeting (meeting space, dates, meals, providing the best hotel accommodation near meeting location, etc.), and prepare the agenda for the semi-annual meeting. Travel funds have been budgeted annually on the Center award, which can also be used for hosting their Network's semi-annual meeting.

32. Tuition Costs

Tuition costs or laboratory fees for work leading to an academic degree cannot be charged against research funds. Costs associated with training postdoctoral fellows as part of their fellowship are permitted, with approval.

33. Uniforms, Wearing Apparel

The cost of uniforms and other wearing apparel is prohibited.

I. CARRYFORWARD OF UNEXPENDED FUNDS

In their final year, awardees may request up to one maximum twelve-month extension to use a portion of or all unexpended funds. The amount of the carryover must be within the permitted dollar limitations listed below. Funds remaining at the end of an authorized extension year must be returned to the Association. A second extension year is not allowed.

Awardees are expected to complete the proposed work, achieve project milestones, and fully utilize the award budget within the designated award period.

1. Continuing Year — If there is a free and unobligated balance of funds of not less than \$100 and no more than \$10,000 at the end of an Award Period and if Project PI is continuing the research, these funds may be carried forward to the next fiscal year without advance approval. This action can be implemented when requesting this deliverable type within the Awards dashboard in [ProposalCentral](#).

If the Center Director / Coordinating Center PI and/or Project PI is interested in carrying over an amount greater than \$10,000, the investigator must provide a *strong* written justification, indicating the reason the funds were not spent and the investigator's plan for spending the funds the following year if the carryover is approved. Each request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The expectation is the approved carryover plus next year's budget will be fully expended in the next budget period. The investigator should not intentionally conserve funds to request a no-cost extension. If the funds are not expended during the period, the Association may request a return of the unexpended balance for that budget period. Award funds must be used for expenses directly related to the approved research project.

If an investigator is experiencing an issue(s) that is causing the progress on the project to stall or to be slowed, they should include this information in their carryover justification. It is important that investigators meet project milestones and have a plan to manage the work to be completed on the approved project.

Our grants management system, [ProposalCentral](#), does not have a mechanism for investigators/fiscal officers to indicate how they want to handle an unspent balance. As a result, the investigator/institutional officer may be asked to indicate their plan for the remaining balance (e.g., do you plan to retain the balance or return it). The investigator/fiscal officer may add a note to the expenditures report in ProposalCentral indicating their plan.

2. Extension Year — The awardee may request up to a one-time 12-month extension to use a portion or all unexpended funds by submitting a no-cost extension request. If there is an unobligated balance of funds at the end of the final fiscal period and the Center Director / Coordinating Center PI and/or Project PI are interested in carrying this amount over into an extension year; this will require prior approval from the Association. The Center Director / Coordinating Center PI and/or Project PI must provide a strong written justification including an explanation for why the funds were not spent during the life of the grant and how the funds will be spent in the extension year, along with a detailed breakdown. This request must be submitted in conjunction with the final Expenditures Report. Association staff will review the request and a notice of disposition of the request will be sent to the Center.

If a request is not approved, the Association will require a refund. If it is the final payment, the payment will be adjusted or cancelled. Reasons for a request may not be approved:

1. If the investigator indicates they saved money to ask for a no-cost extension.
2. If the investigator indicates they want to use the funds to generate data for another grant application.
3. If the investigator used the same explanation that was used in prior years.

The Association no longer accepts no-cost extension requests for balances under \$5,000. A remaining balance of \$5,000 or less should be returned to the American Heart Association. Unexpended funds of less than \$10 may be retained/written off by the Institution. If the final payment has not been paid, this amount may be deducted before the payment is released to cover the reported expenses.

A SECOND EXTENSION YEAR IS NOT ALLOWED. Funds remaining at the end of an authorized extension year must be returned to the Association. The funds may only be used to support the approved project.

J. EXPENDITURES REPORT

Reports should be submitted no later than 90 days after the close of each annual award period, or no later than 90 days after an authorized transfer of the award or early award termination. Reports submitted at the termination of an authorized extension period must be accompanied by a check for the balance of any unexpended funds. Unexpended funds of less than \$10 may be retained.

The Fiscal Officer of the Awardee Institution should include all costs charged to the award on the Expenditures Report.

Quarterly payments and/or the final payment (or some lesser amount) for terminating Awards will be withheld if Expenditures Reports have not been received by the due date. All withheld Award payments revert to the Association if all reports have not been received by six months after the Award Period ends.

K. DEFICITS

The awardee and/or the fiscal officer cannot expend funds more than the amount awarded for each fiscal year. The awardee may submit a request to carryover a deficit balance in special instances (e.g., purchase of equipment). The request must be submitted in advance of incurring the deficit balance and must be reviewed and approved before a deficit balance is incurred.

Deficit balances are NOT ALLOWED in any other circumstances.

L. STRATEGIC NETWORK FELLOWS AND/OR TRAINEES

The Association will track all Network Fellows. Refer to the RFP for requirements for fellows and/or trainees.

Prior approval of a CV and documentation of citizenship/visa status of the proposed fellow and/or trainees within 30 days prior to anticipated start date. Fellows and/or trainees cannot hold a faculty/staff position at any time during their two-year fellowship. (Exception: M.D. or M.D./Ph.D. applicants with clinical responsibilities who hold the title of instructor or similar due to their patient care responsibilities.)

If a fellow and/or trainees' leaves the institution for any reason, the Association staff must be notified immediately so that an appropriate solution can be found in a timely manner.

For institutions that wish to pay fellows and/trainees more than the amount per year allocated in the RFP, funds may be allocated from a Project budget or from outside sources as long as percent effort is maintained. Contact the designated Research Manager or StrategicAwards@heart.org for further guidance.

Fellow and/or Trainee Leave of Absence

If a fellow and/or trainee takes leave (e.g., maternity leave, short term leave, etc.), their institution will manage the process of this leave, in conjunction with Association staff.

- If a fellow and/or trainee takes leave for an extended period of 12 weeks or longer, at the discretion of the institution, the fellow and/or trainee may either complete their fellowship at a later date or work with the institution to set an end date based on the time they were on leave (i.e., extending the fellowship for 12 weeks).
- Upon returning after leave, the fellow and/or trainee is expected to maintain the minimum percent effort towards research training as required by the RFP.

- The fellow and/or trainee's salary/fringe are allocated per the published RFP. If there is a break due to leave, the institution will have the flexibility to manage this internally. If the fellowship is extended due to leave, the funds may be managed more closely to ensure the fellow receives salary during the extension.

Any areas not addressed above should be directed to the designated Research Manager.

M. END-OF-NETWORK EXPECTATIONS (STRATEGIC NETWORK AWARDS)

Network Collaborative Publication

Each Strategic Network will be expected to submit a publication to an Association Journal (e.g., JAHA, CIRC) describing the outcomes of the Network. The objective is to showcase the important research results from the network, as well as successes of the postdoctoral training program. Here are a few suggested formats:

- The publication can be structured to highlight the successes of the Network ranging from scientific discovery, fellow outcomes, collaborations, and challenges overcome.
- Methods-focused manuscript including: 1) statement of the problem/issue/topics addressed, (2) awarded centers focused on 'xyz' and collaborated to accomplish 'abc', (3) include published work and promote the scientific outcomes. Since this publication is an expectation from Association leadership, research staff will work with the scientific publishing staff and journal editors to assist authors.

Reference to the Heart Association's journals: <https://professional.heart.org/en/journals>

Center Directors / Coordinating Center PI will be expected to be available for interviews and the review of the End of Research Narrative Report that will be written by a science writer and designed by the Heart Association to display the impact and the need of this focused area. It will be important to have the Network Collaborative Publication finalized so the title and focus can be incorporated within this final report.

Final Lay Summary Report

Each investigator will be expected to provide a non-scientific summary at or below a tenth-grade level within the annual progress report. Within this report, please address the same questions presented within the application (e.g., 1. What was the major problem addressed by this study; 2. What specific questions were asked and how were they answered? Please do not list your specific aims - this is a brief overview targeted for a lay audience; 3. What was the potential overall impact of this work on the mission of the Heart Association?). The intent is to focus on any outcomes/findings.

Final Reporting Requirements

Final reporting, including scientific progress and expenditures reports will need to be completed prior to the release of the reserve payment for this award.

If you have questions or need clarification on any Award policies, please contact the Strategic Awards Team at StrategicAwards@heart.org.