



American
Heart
Association.

Guide for Strategic Network Awards

January 2021

AHA MISSION STATEMENT

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

PREFACE

The American Heart Association (AHA) congratulates you on your AHA award. It is a great source of pride to the AHA that you have been selected as an Awardee. AHA 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 AHA during and after the term of your Award.

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

This guide has been prepared to assist Center Directors, Project Principal Investigators (Project PIs) and other authorized institutional officials with the specific terms and conditions applicable to AHA strategic network awards. In accepting the award, the Center Director, 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 AHA 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.

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:

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Awards Administration
Division of Research Administration
7272 Greenville Avenue
Dallas, Texas 75231-4596
AHA's Home Page: <https://professional.heart.org>

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I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Strategic Network Awards provide AHA an opportunity to address key strategic issues as determined by the AHA Board of Directors. This initiative is designed to produce a network of interacting institutions and scientists for collaborative and multidisciplinary research. A major component of the centers will be the interdisciplinary training of a new generation of scientists who, from their earliest experiences in research, will collaborate with other scientists through monthly meetings with established investigators and annual meetings with other investigators participating in the centers.

The AHA funded centers will attempt to accomplish the following goals:

- Accelerate generation of important, novel ideas.
- Answer significant questions addressing gaps in knowledge.
- Create important gains (developing new investigators is one such gain).
- Link research and training components through the program.
- Prioritize multidisciplinary approaches with frequent collaborative interactions.
- Demonstrate efficacy through data collection and evaluation.
- Demonstrate the effectiveness or the applicability of the findings in clinical, public health or community-based settings such as workplaces, schools, churches, or other "real-life" settings.

It is anticipated that the results of the funding and formation of these Network Awards including their structure will:

- Produce a cadre of new investigators who will energize the field and lead to the generation of an expansion of the numbers of such investigators in future years.
- Produce new research results based on the initial ideas of the Centers and on ideas generated by the interaction of the Centers and their investigators.
- Provide insights into and report on the challenges and successful mechanisms for active collaboration.
- Identify programs and policies that result in individual lifestyle modifications that reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases and stroke.

II. CONDITIONS FOR AWARD SUPPORT

A. CITIZENSHIP/VISA REQUIREMENTS

Award recipients must meet AHA 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 AHA 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 AHA policy.

1. Center Director
 - 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. Center 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 AHA with 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 AHA, the Center Director, 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, Project PIs and Awardee Institution will promptly notify the AHA of the activation of any award which is alternative or overlapping to AHA 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 an AHA 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 and Project PIs may hold another AHA 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 AHA fellowship or AHA Fellow-to-Faculty Transition Award for the duration of their time as a named fellow at an AHA Network Center and/or Training Center.

D. SUBMISSION OF AWARD ACTIVATION FORMS

To activate an award from the AHA, the Center Director, Project PIs and Awardee Institution(s) must provide the AHA with the required documentation by the due dates set forth in the award letter. The Center Director is required to submit all the forms (Award Agreement, Animal Subject Use Form, Open Science Data Plan/Opt-Out and the Project budget). The 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 AHA cannot activate an award until all the documentation has been received. (See section III Life Cycle of an AHA Award, B for more information.)

E. MODIFICATION OF AWARD TERMS

The AHA reserves the right to modify the terms of its Award Agreement with 12 months written notice to the Awardee and the Institution.

F. POLICIES GOVERNING ALL AHA RESEARCH AWARDS

The following link references all AHA research policies applicable and enforceable for awardees. <https://professional.heart.org/en/research-programs/aha-research-policies-and-awardee-hub/policies-governing-all-research-awards>

III. LIFE CYCLE OF AN AHA AWARD

A. NOTICE OF AWARD

After funding decisions have been made, the Center Director 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 along with the review comments. 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 AHA. All deliverables including the Award Agreement Form should be submitted electronically by the Center Director and Project PIs through the [ProposalCentral](#) system within one month of award notification. The Award Agreement Form requires original signatures and should be scanned and emailed to the AHA within one month of award notification. The mail address is included on the Agreement Form.

Form	Purpose	Date due to the AHA
Award Agreement Form (submit with original signatures)	Contract between the AHA, the Awardee and Awardee Institution	Due within 90 days of award notification
Fellow Appointment Change Request (Including CV & documentation of Citizenship/Visa status)	AHA review and approval of fellow credentials	Due within 30 days of proposing fellow. First fellow appointment is due within 90 days of award start date. Subsequent fellows should start on or around the award start date in sequential years.
Animal Subject Use Form	Identifies 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 to conduct animal or human subject research	Regulatory Approval and Informed Consent for human subject research is due within 90 days of award notification.
Bank Information* (submitted by Grants Officer)	Provides information for sending award payments to the Institution.	Due within 90 days of award Notification.

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

C. LOCATION OF WORK

AHA SFRN awards are limited to U.S.-based non-profit institutions, including medical, osteopathic, and dental schools, veterinary schools, schools of public health, pharmacy schools, nursing schools, universities and colleges, public and voluntary hospitals and others that can demonstrate the ability to conduct the proposed research. It 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 Veterans Administrations employees. There are no restrictions on collaborating investigators.

Awards for research to be performed outside the United States are limited to Principal Investigators who are United States citizens. Awardees, who are US citizens, may request AHA approval to temporarily conduct work in foreign countries (e.g., outside US, Canada, and Mexico) with AHA Award funds to be administered through the investigator's sponsoring US Institution.

D. PERCENTAGE EFFORT

There is a 20% minimum effort requirement for the Center Director, 5% minimum effort requirement for the Training Director 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 OAC.

E. PAYMENT METHOD

The AHA 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.

Payment is made to the Center Institution. The Center Institution will be responsible for distributing funds to Project Institutions.

Payments will be placed on hold for delinquent reports and/or deliverables, or if it is found that 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 determined by the AHA) for terminating awards will be withheld if scientific reports or expenditures reports have not been received by the due date. All withheld award payments revert to the AHA if the AHA has not received all reports six months after the award period ends.

Institutions are required to provide the AHA with complete bank information to facilitate payment. 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](#).

AHA 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.

F. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Center institution will maintain fiscal responsibility for the center and all projects. The appropriate Grants/Sponsored Programs Officer and Institutional Officer should sign off on submitted reports.

Scientific Reports — The Center Director is required to submit a scientific report for the center as a whole and include progress from the participating fellows. The Project PIs are also required to submit a scientific report for their projects. 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 — The Center Director and Project PIs are required to submit expenditures report annually for the duration of the award and at the end of the no-cost extension. An annual request for the submission of the Progress Reports will be sent by 90 days prior to the deadline. The reports will be due no later than 90 days after the end of the award period.

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

Patient Recruitment Reports – For projects that have received regulatory approval and have started recruiting patients, Quarterly Patient 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 AHA and are submitted by email to the Strategic Awards inbox, StrategicAwards@heart.org. Reminder emails will be sent 30 days prior to the due date.

Invention Disclosures – The report submitted to AHA 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 AHA within 60 days of the date the Invention is disclosed and prior to any public disclosure.

Award payments will be withheld if these reports have not been received by the due dates. In addition, the final payment (or some lesser amount determined by the AHA) of the Award may be withheld until all reports have been received by the AHA. All withheld Award payments revert to the AHA if the AHA has not received all reports six months after the Award Period ends.

TYPE OF FORM	SUBMITTED BY	DATE DUE TO THE AHA
Scientific Report	Center Director and Project PIs (requires approval signatures from Center Director and Project PIs)	Due annually at the end of each year of the award.
Expenditures Report	Center Director and Project PI submit expenditures to Fiscal Officer (requires approval signatures from FO, Center Director and Project PIs)	Due annually within 90 days of the end of each year of the award.
Invention Disclosures	Center Director and/or Project Principal Investigator	Due within 60 days of the date the Invention is disclosed and prior to any public disclosure

G. TITLE TO EQUIPMENT

Title to equipment purchased with AHA award funds shall be vested in the Institution where the Project PI is conducting the center 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 AHA approves the transfer of an award to another institution, equipment purchased with AHA 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.

H. 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 AHA 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 AHA 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 AHA.

A written request should be submitted to the AHA indicating the dates of the leave, the reasons for the request and the Investigator's intention to resume the research project. The AHA 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 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 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 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 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 to the AHA, if applicable.

The AHA will review the request and a notice of disposition will be provided to the Center Director 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-month increments. A maximum of two consecutive six-month increments may be requested during the term of an Award.

All requests are subject to review by AHA staff and/or the OAC. 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.

I. 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 AHA staff and the OAC will provide external oversight in an advisory capacity to the Centers and Project Awards.

1. Change of Principal Investigator — A change of Center Director is not allowed during the term of the award period. Exceptions to this would be allowed only for extreme circumstances (e.g., severe illness, disability, or death). In very limited circumstances the AHA and OAC will consider a permanent change of Project PI. The following documents must be sent to the AHA at least 60 days prior to the proposed change:

- A letter from the Center Director 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 indicating willingness to accept responsibility for pursuance of the research project. A current curriculum vitae and bibliography must accompany this letter.

The request to change the 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 - In very limited circumstances the AHA and OAC will consider a permanent change of Training Director. The following documents must be sent to the AHA 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 AHA 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. Request for Co-Center Director – All requests for Co-Center Directors must be written into the application and peer reviewed. Any requests made after funding decisions must be submitted in writing, reviewed, and approved by the AHA and OAC.
4. Request for Deputy Roles – All requests for Deputy Directors or Deputy PIs must be written into the application and peer reviewed. Any requests made after funding decisions must be submitted in writing, reviewed, and approved by the AHA and OAC.

5. Change of location of Award (institutional transfer) — Centers are not transferrable 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 AHA and OAC. The effective date of the transfer should be the first of the month.

The Project PI should submit all the following material to the AHA 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 department chairperson 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 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 the 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, a 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.

6. 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 AHA. The effective date of the transfer should be the first of the month.

The Project PI should submit all the following material to the AHA Division of Research Administration 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 AHA will review the request and a notice of disposition will be sent to the Project PI, Fiscal Officer, and department chairperson.

7. 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 AHA encourages modification in design of Projects as new research opportunities develop. One of the primary goals of the AHA's research program is to encourage and protect the academic and scientific freedom of its investigators. However, the AHA must be notified of major changes in the direction or content of the original research Proposal.
8. 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. The new chairperson and/or Fiscal Officer should send a letter to the AHA 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 AHA to discuss appropriate options.

J. PUBLICATIONS

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. 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. The AHA requires acknowledgment of Association support in all publications resulting from work carried out during the tenure of their Award as follows:

"THIS WORK WAS SUPPORTED BY AN AWARD FROM THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION."

K. 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 AHA. The following principles and procedures are followed by the AHA in publicizing investigators and studies supported through the AHA research program.

1. Principal Investigator Approval

All publicity must have advance approval of the awardee and the AHA. 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 by the AHA 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 AHA sponsored research should be released to the mass media through the AHA. 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 AHA of his or her communications with the media.

L. EARLY TERMINATION OR RESIGNATION OF AWARD

1. By the Awardee — An award may be terminated at any time upon written notification to the AHA. 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 and/or Project PI and the final Expenditures Report has been approved by AHA staff.
2. By the AHA — An award may be terminated by the AHA 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 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 by AHA.

Upon notification by the AHA 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 AHA upon due notice.

C. AUDIT

The AHA 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 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 AHA will revise project support budget resulting in the maintenance of the required minimum of project support. Funds will be re-budgeted from the Project PI's salary category to project support. AHA 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 up to ten percent (10%) of the total expenditures each year 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 lessor 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 AHA EXPENDITURES (TABLE)

If an expense is not specifically indicated in the table, please contact AHA.

CATEGORY OF EXPENSE	ALLOWABLE ON AHA AWARDS
Alterations and Renovations	Only if essential, prior AHA approval is required
Books, Subscriptions	No
Center Director Salary/Fringe	Yes, up to \$50,000 per year
Co-Investigator Salary/Fringes	Yes, to be taken from Project Budgets
Computers	Yes
Consultative Services	May be requested prior to payment of said consultant.
Equipment	Yes, prior AHA 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
Indirect Costs	Up to 10% of total annual expenditures.
Malpractice Insurance	No
Membership Dues	Only AHA 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 patients 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
Patient Transportation	May be requested prior to payment.
Payment of Human Subjects	May be requested prior to payment.
Personnel Recruitment	No
Project PI Salary/Fringes	Yes, commensurate with percent effort devoted to the project.
Postage — Overnight Mail related to project	Yes, the name of the carrier used should be listed on the financial report.
Publication Costs and Reprints	Yes
Receptions and Meals	No, unless otherwise approved at award activation.

Scientific Meetings Abroad	Yes, with prior approval
Service Contracts	Yes
Subcontracts	May be requested.
Supplies	Yes
Telephone — Long Distance related to project	Yes, must be listed as Long Distance on the expenditures report.
Training Director Salary/Fringes	Yes, to be taken from the \$50K allowed for Center Director
Travel — Domestic	Yes
Travel — Foreign	Yes
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. Center Director Salary/Fringe
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-Project PI, Collaborating Investigator Salary/Fringes
Co-Investigators, Co-Project PIs, Collaborating Investigators, and other participants with faculty appointments may receive personal salary from the award with prior AHA 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 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 AHA 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. The AHA will review the request and a notice of disposition will be sent to the Center Director.

7. 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 the 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 AHA 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 and the Financial Officer at the institution. The AHA will review the request and a notice of disposition on the request will be sent to the principal investigator.

8. 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 is prohibited.

9. 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 an amount is properly charged to the award.

10. Malpractice Insurance

The premiums for malpractice insurance are not permitted.

11. Membership Dues

Awardees are allowed to expense AHA membership dues. Membership dues to other organizations are prohibited.

12. 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 to AHA within 30 days of proposing the individual.

Personnel with faculty appointments may receive personal salary from the award with prior approval from the AHA. If approved, the funds must be allocated from the amount available for Project PI salary and fringe.

13. Overhead

Overhead, also referred to as indirect costs, may be charged up to ten percent (10%) of the total expenditures 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.

14. **Parking Fees**
AHA policy prohibits use of AHA grant funds for parking fees for award personnel. However, parking fees can be requested to reimburse patients enrolled in a research project and/or research personnel that are required to travel between study sites to complete recruitment and/or study visits. The AHA will review the request and a notice of disposition on the request will be sent to the principal investigator.
15. **Patient Care, Hospitalization, Diagnostic Laboratory Tests**
AHA policy prohibits use of AHA 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.
16. **Patient Transportation**
The cost of transporting patients to laboratories for special investigative tests may be requested. The principal investigator must submit a written request/justification for the payment of the patient transportation and the approximate cost. The AHA will review the request and a notice of disposition will be sent to the principal investigator.
17. **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. The AHA will review the request and a notice of disposition on the request will be sent to the principal investigator.
18. **Personnel Recruitment**
The cost of advertising to recruit personnel for a research project is prohibited.
19. **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.
20. **Principal Investigator Salary/Fringes**
Award policies allow some salary and fringe benefits for the Center Director and Project PI to be budgeted. The Center Director salary/fringe is limited to \$50K direct cost per year. Project PI salary/fringes must be consistent with the percent of investigator’s total effort devoted to the research project, within specified AHA limits.
21. **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.
22. **Receptions and Meals**
The costs of receptions and/or meals are not permitted unless otherwise approved at award activation.
23. **Scientific Meetings Abroad**
Costs of registration, travel, and attendance at scientific meetings in foreign countries are allowed but will require a detailed budget justification.

24. 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.

25. Subcontracts

If a subcontract arises between the Center institution and an outside entity, the Director must notify the AHA immediately. A copy of the subcontract should be forwarded to the AHA for review and appropriateness. Once all parties have agreed to the subcontract, a signed copy should be forwarded to the AHA for reference. The expenses associated with a subcontract must be approved by the AHA. 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.

26. 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.

27. Telephone — Long Distance

Long Distance charges directly related to the project are permitted.

28. Training Director Salary/Fringes

Training Directors may receive personal salary from the award with prior AHA 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, 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.

29. 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.

30. Tuition Costs

Tuition costs or laboratory fees for work leading to an academic degree cannot be charged against research funds.

31. 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 a 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 AHA. A second extension year is not allowed.

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 the 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 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 the 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 AHA may request a return of the unexpended balance for that budget period. Award funds must be used for expenses directly related to the approved AHA 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 — If there is an unobligated balance of funds at the end of the final fiscal period and the Center Director and/or Project PI is interested in carrying this amount over into an extension year; this will require prior approval from the AHA. The Center Director 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. The AHA will review the request and a notice of disposition of the request will be sent to the Center.

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

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.

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 determined by the AHA) for terminating Awards will be withheld if Expenditures Reports have not been received by the due date. All withheld Award payments revert to the AHA if the AHA has not received all reports six months after the Award Period ends.

K. DEFICITS

The Center Director and/or the Fiscal Officer cannot expend funds more than the amount awarded for each fiscal year. A Center Director (Project PI) 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 by the AHA before a deficit balance is incurred.

Deficit balances are NOT ALLOWED for any other circumstances.

L. CENTER FELLOWS

The AHA will track all Network Fellows. Unless the RFA states differently, each Center is required to recruit and train 3 fellows over the life of the grant with one fellow starting each in Years 1, 2 and 3.

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

If a fellow leaves the Center for any reason, the Director must notify the AHA immediately so that an appropriate solution can be found in a timely manner.

For institutions that wish to pay fellows more than the amount per year allocated in the RFA, funds may be allocated from a Project budget or from outside sources as long as percent effort is maintained at 75% for research training.

If the Network salary/fringe for a Fellow exceeds the minimum per the RFA, additional funds to supplement salary and fringe can be taken from the Center Directors or Project PI budget or additional funding sources.

Fellow Leave of Absence

If a fellow takes leave (e.g., maternity leave, short term leave, etc.), the fellow's institution will manage the process of this leave, in conjunction with AHA staff.

- If a fellow takes leave for an extended period of 12 weeks or longer, at the discretion of the institution, the fellow 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).
- Once the fellow returns, they are expected to maintain 75% effort towards research training.
- The fellow's salary/fringe are allocated per the published RFA. 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 your AHA Research Manager.

M. END-OF-NETWORK EXPECTATIONS

Network Collaborative Publication

Each Strategic Network will be expected to submit a publication to an AHA Journal (e.g., JAHA, CIRC) describing the outcomes of the Network. The timing for this should be no later than 90 days after ALL Centers have completed their projects at the end of the award. 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 could be structured to highlight the successes of the Network ranging from scientific discovery, fellow outcomes, collaborations, and challenges overcome.
- Methods paper 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 of AHA leadership, AHA will work with the scientific publishing staff and journal editors to assist authors.

Reference to AHA journals: <https://professional.heart.org/en/journals>

Center Directors 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 AHA 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.

Center Final Lay Summary Report

The Center and Project PIs will be expected to provide a non-scientific summary at or below a tenth-grade level within 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 AHA?). The intent is to focus on the progress of the Center and Projects, including 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.