

Application Deadlines

- Founders Affiliate - Jan. 15, 2016
- Great Rivers Affiliate - Jan. 12, 2016
- Greater Southeast Affiliate - Jan. 15, 2016 Mid-
- Atlantic Affiliate - Jan. 12, 2016
- Midwest Affiliate - Jan. 13, 2016
- SouthWest Affiliate - Jan. 14, 2016
- Western States Affiliate - Jan. 14, 2016

Award Activation: July 1, 2016

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

Program Description, Eligibility and Peer Review Criteria

[Success Rates](#)

Objective

To help trainees initiate careers in cardiovascular and stroke research while obtaining significant research results under the supervision of a sponsor or mentor; supports individuals before they are ready for some stage of independent research.

Science Focus

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

Disciplines

Proposals are encouraged from all basic, epidemiological, behavioral, community and clinical disciplines that bear on cardiovascular and stroke problems.

Target Audience

At the *time of award activation*, the applicant must:

- have a post-baccalaureate doctoral degree, including M.D., Ph.D., D.O., D.V.M., Pharm.D., or equivalent.
- have no more than five years postdoctoral research training or experience. Time spent in clinical training is excluded.

This award is not intended for individuals of faculty rank.

Exceptions:

- M.D. or M.D./Ph.D. with clinical responsibilities who needs instructor or similar title to see patients, but who devote at least 80% full-time to research training.

- R.N./Ph.D. with faculty appointment. Awardee will be expected to devote his/her time to research or activities directly related to their development into independent researchers.
All other eligibility criteria apply.

Awardees will be expected to devote their time to research or activities directly related to their development into independent researchers, as opposed to administrative, patient care, or teaching responsibilities. At the time of award activation, candidate cannot be pursuing a doctoral degree. Applicants in this situation should be referred to the AHA Predoctoral Fellowship.

Sponsor

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

A fellow must have primary responsibility for the writing and the preparation of the Fellowship application, understanding that the Sponsor will play a significant part in providing guidance to the applicant.

Citizenship

At the *time of application*, must have one of the following designations:

- U.S. citizen
- Permanent resident
- Pending permanent resident. Applicants must have applied for permanent residency and have filed form I-485 with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and have received authorization to legally remain in the United States (having filed an Application for Employment Form I-765).
- E-3 - specialty occupation worker
- F1 - student visa
- 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
- G-4 Visa - family member of employee of international organizations and NATO

Exception: Postdoctoral fellowship applicants outside the United States at the time of application must provide visa documentation prior to award activation. Awardee must meet American Heart Association citizenship criteria throughout the duration of the award.

Location of Work

The award may be completed at any accredited institution in the following affiliates:

Founders - Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont

Great Rivers - Delaware, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania or West Virginia

Greater Southeast - Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, U.S. Virgin Islands

Mid-Atlantic - District of Columbia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina or Virginia

Midwest - Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, South Dakota, Wisconsin

SouthWest - Arkansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Wyoming

Western States - Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington

American Heart Association research awards are limited to 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. Applications will not be accepted for work with funding to be administered through any federal institution or work to be performed by a federal employee, except for Veterans Administrations employees.

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

Budget

Trainee Stipend/Salary: Stipend for Postdoctoral Fellow, plus \$1,000 per year for health insurance.

Years of Experience	Stipend for FY 2015
0	\$42,850
1	\$44,600
2	\$46,350
3	\$48,200
4	\$50,150
5	\$52,150
6	\$54,250
7 or more	\$56,400

Project Support: \$3,000 per year, in addition to the stipend.

No limit on any line item (travel, computers, equipment, etc.)

International travel is permitted and does not require prior AHA approval.

Entire project support amount may be used for travel.

Maximum Annual Award Amount: \$48,850-\$60,400

Award Duration: Two years. May apply for a second two-year award. All eligibility criteria apply. Maximum of four years of Association post doctoral fellowship support per individual.

Total Award Amount: \$95,450 - \$120,800

Restrictions

- A primary sponsor may have no more than two AHA-funded fellows (predoctoral and/or postdoctoral) at any time. Fellows who are part of an AHA Strategically Focused Research Network are excluded.
- At the time of award activation, an applicant may not have more than five years of postdoctoral research training or experience. Time spent in clinical training is excluded.
- Postdoctoral fellowship awardees must resign an award if promoted to a staff or faculty position.
- At the time of award activation, the fellow may not be pursuing a doctoral degree. Applicants in this situation should be referred to the AHA predoctoral fellowship.
- Awardee may not hold another AHA award concurrently.
- The fellow may not hold a comparable award as a source of supplementation.

- An applicant may submit only one affiliate application per deadline. If eligible, an applicant may simultaneously submit an application to an affiliate and to the association-wide award program. The proposed research plan may need to be adjusted based upon different length of award and dollars available. The deadline dates may be different for each submission. If both are funded, the applicant must choose one award.
- Submission of an application to the AHA with identical or significantly similar content as a submission by another investigator is prohibited. Also, the submission of an application to the AHA with identical or significantly similar content from a sponsor to a grant program and his/her fellow to fellowship program is prohibited. Both applications will receive a recommendation for “disapproval”. If a grant application is submitted by the sponsor of a fellowship application, both applications may be funded if there is no duplication of aims.
- An applicant who is unsuccessful in a competition may resubmit the same or similar application three times (the original plus two resubmissions). The same or similar application submitted for the fourth time will be administratively withdrawn.
- A Fellow may not hold another Association award concurrent with the Fellowship. However, the fellow may apply for the Beginning Grant-in-Aid, Scientist Development Grant, or Grant-in-Aid in the last year of the Fellowship. The Fellowship will terminate by the time at which an Association grant is activated.

Peer Review Criteria

Contacting AHA peer reviewers concerning your application is deemed a form of scientific misconduct and will result in the removal of your application from funding consideration and institutional notification of ethical concerns.

In order to judge the merit of the application, reviewers will comment on following criteria. Please be sure to address these in your proposal. Each criterion will account for one-third of the overall score.

Criterion 1 - Evaluation of the Investigator (Postdoctoral Fellow)

1. Does the trainee have potential for a research career?
2. Are the trainee's career plans specified in the application?
3. Is this supported by the trainee's academic record and the assessment provided by the three letters of reference?
4. Does the trainee have prior research experience and/or publications?
5. Is there a clear rationale supporting the need for the proposed training?
6. What is the sponsor's assessment of the applicant?

Criterion 2 - Sponsor/Training Plan and Environment

Because the fellow receives only a stipend from this award, additional research support for the proposed project **MUST** come from the sponsor's laboratory. Therefore, the proposed project will likely be related to the sponsor's funded research. The sponsor should clarify the role that the applicant played in the development of the proposal, the relationship of the proposed project to ongoing research in the sponsor's laboratory, and how the project will contribute toward the training and career development of the applicant.

Sponsor/Training Plan

1. Is the mentor an independent investigator?
2. Does the mentor have the experience to direct the proposed research training, as evidenced by a track record regarding productivity, funding and prior trainees?
3. Does the mentor have adequate current funding to support the fellow's project?
4. Does the mentor provide a comprehensive training plan which incorporates career and developmental goals detailed in the applicant's Individual Development Plan (IDP)? Will the mentor's training plan facilitate the

applicant's progress towards his/her research career goals?

Environment

1. Does the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success for the training experience?
2. Is there evidence of institutional commitment?

Criterion 3 - Evaluation of the Proposal

1. **Significance:** Does this study address an important problem broadly related to cardiovascular disease or stroke? What will be the effect of these studies on the concepts, methods and technologies that drive this field?
2. **Approach:** A new fellow may not have had adequate time to generate preliminary data. Applicants can present preliminary data generated by the sponsor. The assessment of preliminary data, whether generated by the sponsor or the applicant, should be put into perspective so that bold new ideas and risk taking by beginning investigators are encouraged rather than stymied. Are the conceptual framework, design, methods and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, well-reasoned, feasible (as determined by preliminary data or the expertise available in the mentor's and/or collaborator's laboratories) and appropriate to the aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?
3. **Innovation:** Is the project original?
4. **Impact:** How does this project address the mission of the AHA, and how likely will this support enhance PI career development in the area of cardiovascular diseases and stroke?

Interim Reporting - Annual progress reports submitted by both Fellow and sponsor, including narrative description of accomplishments related to research and training, as well as an inventory of abstracts and publications produced.

Evaluation - Publications, citations by others, ability to obtain ongoing research funding, advancement in academic/professional status (e.g., appointment to a faculty position), contribution of Association support to career advancement.

Postdoctoral Fellowship

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