

2026 American Heart Association Institutional Award for Undergraduate Student Training

[Application Instructions \(PDF\)](#)

[Required Application Documents](#)

[Supporting Sudden Cardiac Arrest Research](#)

[ProposalCentral](#)

Key Dates

RFP posted:	April 4, 2025
ProposalCentral open:	July 1, 2025
Proposal deadline:	Wed., Sept. 10, 2025
Award notification:	Dec. 2025
Award start:	Jan. 1, 2026

Important Notes

- Proposals must be received no later than **3 p.m. Central Time** on the deadline date. Early submission is encouraged.
- Before beginning an application, see the [AHA Application Resources](#) page for requirements that apply to all AHA research awards. Also view AHA's research [Policies and Statements](#).
- Proposals must be **submitted electronically via ProposalCentral**. The system will open eight weeks prior to the application deadline to complete the proposal and upload required documents. Applicant can create required documents in advance; refer to the [AHA Application Instructions \(PDF\)](#). **All submissions require the signature of a designated institutional representative.**
- Applicants must be [AHA Professional Members](#) at the time of proposal submission. [Join or renew](#) when preparing an application in ProposalCentral, or by phone at [+1-888-242-2453](#) or [972-349-5803](#). Membership processing may take 3-5 days; do not wait until the application deadline to renew or join. The AHA expects all mentors associated with training/mentored research awards to maintain active AHA membership, as well.

Purpose

To encourage students from all disciplines to consider research careers.

This is an institutional award, made to qualified institutions that can offer a meaningful research experience that supports the mission of the American Heart Association to undergraduate college students.

Program Structure

This is an institutional award to qualified research institutions that can offer a meaningful research experience to undergraduate college students. A program director applies on behalf of the institution, with an internal selection process outlined, in which the sponsor/student pairs apply together for one of the awards from the institution.

- The institution must include a student recruitment plan that is open to students at any school. A sponsor/student team may be located at any non-research undergraduate institution if there is a letter from the sponsoring institution assuring support for the project and responsibility for the student's work.
- Preference should not be given to current students of the sponsors' laboratories.
- The institution is strongly encouraged to recruit students from groups that are underrepresented in science.
- The institution may apply for support for two to five students per year. The request must be justified by the institution, based on how many students they can effectively manage.
- This is a three-year award that supports two to five students per institution, per year. Renewal is based on satisfactory interim reporting from students, sponsors, and the program director.
- The American Heart Association permits the use of a large language model (LLM – e.g., ChatGPT) or an artificial intelligence tool to generate and/or edit content in research proposals submitted for funding. This information must be disclosed at the time of submission. Disclosure of this information does not impact peer review. Should this information not be disclosed accurately, and use of these tools is identified, the proposal may be administratively withdrawn.

Hyperlinks to data/figures/additional information are not permitted in the Research Plan nor any other proposal documents. This includes use of the Precision Medicine Platform for applications and peer review purposes.

Sponsor

All applicants (excluding fellows) are to include a statement in the Personal Statement section of their biographical sketch that explicitly states how they contribute to a safe, inclusive, and diverse work environment.

In addition, mentors on Fellowships, Career Development Awards, and Research Supplements should complete recognized training specific to sexual and gender-based harassment.

- Up to five sponsors may be identified, commensurate with the number of students proposed to be supported.
- A sponsor must demonstrate that the student will be provided with a meaningful experience in research that supports the mission of the American Heart Association within the 10-week period allotted for the award.
- A sponsor/mentor may supervise no more than four AHA-funded fellows (predoctoral and/or postdoctoral) and no more than two AHA-supported student fellows (undergraduate and/or medical/graduate students) at any time. This restriction does not apply to co-sponsors. Fellows who are part of an AHA Strategically Focused Research Network are excluded.

- Sponsor must provide a detailed description of available support, projects available for the student to work on, and the nature of research activities of each project, which will be submitted to AHA by the Program Director at the time of award activation.
- Sponsor must possess a track record of supporting trainees.
- The program director may serve as a sponsor.

Student Trainee

The program director will submit the list of student trainees at award activation; this is not part of the application.

- To be eligible for this program, an undergraduate student must be classified at junior or senior academic status at the time of award activation or may complete the fellowship immediately following graduation.
- A student who was previously supported by an AHA student fellowship may apply for an additional fellowship in a subsequent year. However, a student who has been supported by two AHA undergraduate fellowships is no longer eligible to apply. An application for a second undergraduate fellowship should be well-justified.
- Student must be enrolled full-time or a recent graduate of an undergraduate degree program at a four-year college or university.
- At the time of application, the student must be a United States citizen, or foreign national holding a student, exchange, or permanent resident visa, including an F-1, H1, H1B, J1, PR, or TN. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status requires additional AHA approval to apply. Send an email to Apply@Heart.org with an explanation of the student's status and a statement of support from the sponsor.
- Students are not required to reside in the U.S. for any period of time before being supported by applying for American Heart Association funding.
- Students may not hold funds from AHA Scholarships in Cardiovascular Disease given by AHA Professional Councils at the same time as they are supported by an AHA Institutional Award for Undergraduate Student Training.

Budget

Interim Reporting

After each year of the award, the documents listed below are to be submitted to the AHA by the Program Director. Continued funding of the award and eligibility for subsequent awards will be contingent upon meeting these reporting requirements.

- From each student: Up to a one-page narrative on experience, lessons learned, and future educational and career plans.
- Student awardees from years one and two are expected to submit an annual update of their educational and career progress, at least until the award has ended. It is in the best interest of the institution to make students aware that they will be asked for an annual update of their academic and/or career activities through the end of the award.
- From each sponsor: Up to a two-page narrative on the training experience, including research and training accomplishments, abstracts, and publications.
- From Program Director: Up to three pages outlining methods used for identifying and selecting sponsors and students; the extent to which the awarded slots were filled, and a

reporting of how many students were minorities. Preference should not be given to current students of the sponsors' laboratories.

- At the end of the three-year award, the Program Director is to submit a final report that summarizes the experience from the standpoint of the institution. The final report should include a review of each student's educational and career progression.

Peer Review Criteria

Overall Impact

Reviewers will provide an overall impact/priority score to reflect their assessment of how well the proposed program supports the mission of the American Heart Association, and the likelihood of the program to provide a meaningful 10-week research experience, in consideration of the following review criteria. Reviewers will comment on the following three criteria, each of which will account for one-third of the overall score.

Assessment of the Program Director

The program director is the applicant for this award.

Does the program director have the scientific background, expertise, time commitment, and administrative and training experience to provide strong leadership, direction, management, and administration of the proposed research training program?

Student Trainee Recruitment Plan

1. Does the application contain a recruitment plan with strategies to attract well-qualified student candidates, both from within the sponsoring institution or from any four-year college or university?
2. Are there well-defined and justified student selection criteria?
3. Is there a well-defined plan for recruiting individuals who have faced challenges or obstacles to their career due to their membership in one or more racial and ethnic groups, or due to their identification as LGBTQ+; military veterans, people with physical or mental impairment; individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds?
4. Is a procedure in place that sponsor/student teams will follow to compete for the AHA funds granted to the institution?

Training Program and Environment

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

1. Are the research facilities and environment conducive to preparing trainees for successful careers in biomedical research? Is the level of institutional commitment to the training program, including administrative and research training support, sufficient to ensure the success of the program?
2. Do the proposed research projects that students could be imbedded in/exposed to provide opportunities for trainees to acquire state-of-the-art scientific knowledge, methods, and tools that are relevant to the goals of the training program?
3. Are sufficient numbers of experienced proposed sponsors with appropriate expertise and funding available to support the number and level of trainees proposed in the application?

Do the proposed sponsors have strong records as researchers, including recent publications and successful competition for research support in areas directly related to the proposed research training program? Do the proposed sponsors have strong records of training undergraduate and graduate students? For each proposed sponsor/student team from a non-research undergraduate institution, is there either:

- a. An established collaboration (such as shared papers) and a letter from the sponsoring institution assuring support for the project and responsibility for the student's work,
 - b. For new collaborations, a letter from the sponsoring institution as outlined above?
4. Does the program provide appropriate inter- or multidisciplinary research training opportunities?
 5. Are there planned activities and educational opportunities for the cohort of student trainees?
 6. Is the proposed training program likely to ensure trainees will be prepared for research-intensive and/or research-related careers?
 7. Does the program propose a rigorous evaluation plan to assess the quality and effectiveness of the training? Are effective mechanisms in place for obtaining feedback from current and former trainees?

Renewals

For subsequent awards, the peer review committee will consider the progress made in the last three-year funding period, including on the Recruitment Plan. Does the application describe the program's accomplishments over the past funding period(s)? Is the program achieving its training objectives? Has the program evaluated the quality and effectiveness of the training experience, and is there evidence that the evaluation outcomes and feedback from trainees have been acted upon? Are changes proposed that are likely to improve or strengthen the research training experience during the next project period?

Training Record

1. How successful were past trainees in completing the program?
2. Has the training program ensured that trainees are productive in terms of research accomplishments, presentation and/or publication of research conducted during the training period, and subsequent training appointments and fellowship or career development awards?
3. Have past trainees continued research training/career tracks, such as enrollment in graduate or professional school, honors, awards and scholarships?