

# Founders Affiliate Predoctoral Fellowship Program Description

Award Activation: January 1, 2012

## Program Description, Eligibility and Peer Review Criteria

### Objective

To help students initiate careers in cardiovascular and stroke research by providing research assistance and training

### 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 disciplines, as well as epidemiological, behavioral, community and clinical investigations that bear on cardiovascular and stroke problems.

### Target Audience

- Post baccalaureate, predoctoral M.D., Ph.D., D.O., D.V.M. (or equivalent) students who seek research training with a sponsor//mentor prior to embarking on a research career.
- Full-time students working towards their degrees.

At the time of application, the applicant must:

- Meet institutional requirements for grant submission.

### Sponsor

It's 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.

## **Citizenship**

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

- U.S. citizen
- Permanent resident
- Pending permanent resident. Applicant 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 Visa - specialty occupation worker
- H1-B Visa - temporary worker in a specialty occupation
- F-1 - Student 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

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

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

## **Location of Work**

The award may be completed at any accredited institution in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island or Vermont.

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 Administration employees.

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

## **Budget/Annual Award Amount**

**Trainee Stipend/Salary:** \$21,000; institution may supplement stipend

**Fringe Benefit:** \$1,000 for health insurance

**Indirect:** not allowed

**Project Support:** The award does not allow project support, dependent allowance or tuition.

**Total Annual Award Amount:** \$22,000

**Award Duration:** one or two years

The Founders Affiliate restricts total amount of AHA predoctoral research support to two years, maximum.

## **Peer Review Criteria**

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 a third of the overall score.

### **Criterion 1 - Evaluation of the Investigator**

Does the trainee have potential for a research career?

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

### **Criterion 2 - Sponsor/Training Plan and Environment**

#### **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 that will 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?

Applicants should never contact reviewers regarding their applications. Discussing scientific content of an application or attempting to influence review outcome will constitute a conflict of interest in the review. Reviewers must notify the AHA if an applicant contacts them.

### **Restrictions**

- This award is not for individuals of faculty/staff rank.
- Awardee must devote full-time effort to research or activities related to research.
- An investigator may not hold more than one AHA award concurrently. Exception(s): an investigator may hold two AHA grants (affiliate and national) concurrently if all three apply:
  - 1) There will be no more than six months remaining on the initial award.
  - 2) The projects have no overlap in specific aims.

3) There is no budgetary overlap between the two projects.

- 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 national 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.
- The fellow cannot hold a comparable award as a source of supplementation.
- Sponsor may have no more than two AHA-funded Fellows (pre-doctoral and postdoctoral) at any time.
- The Founders Affiliate allows a maximum of two years of AHA pre-doctoral fellowship support per individual.
- 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.