South Central Affiliate Beginning Grant-in-Aid Program Description and Eligibility Criteria

Award Activation: Jan. 1, 2011

If your research will be conducted in one of the following states, may apply to the South Central Affiliate: Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION, ELIGIBILITY & PEER REVIEW CRITERIA

Objective
To promote the independent status of promising beginning scientists by supporting high-quality, well-defined research projects in the cardiovascular or stroke areas. Investigators who have already established a career as an independent scientist should apply to the affiliate's Grant-in-Aid program.

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

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

Proposals from candidates, who are clinically active M.D., D.O., Ph.D. or equivalent degreed investigators pursuing clinically-oriented cardiovascular and stroke-related research, are encouraged for all South Central Affiliate research programs.

Target Audience
Beginning Grants-in-Aid are intended to support independent research by applicants who must have:

1. A faculty/staff appointment or equivalent academic or research track position, up to and including a rank of assistant professor, by the time of award activation (January 1). The applicant must meet institutional requirements for submission of an extramural, peer reviewed grant proposal.
2. No more than seven years of active faculty/staff appointment prior to award activation (January 1). (Applicants need to justify any time off.)
3. No more than $150,000 of all extramural grant support per year (direct costs), excluding principal investigator and collaborating investigator salaries, fringe benefits, and intramural funding. (Funds from awards that terminate prior to the January 1 activation date are excluded.)

The principal investigator must have sole responsibility for:

1. Preparing and submitting the proposal.
2. Conducting the research.
3. Analyzing, reporting and publishing the results.
4. Allocating and administering the research budget.

Postdoctoral research fellows are ineligible for Beginning Grant-in-Aid support unless they have faculty/staff appointment at activation (Jan. 1).
Citizenship
At 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
- H1-B Visa -- temporary worker in a specialty occupation
- J-1 Visa. Note: You must have an H-1B or equivalent by the award activation date. If the H-1B or equivalent is not received by the award activation date, the award must be relinquished.
- O-1 Visa -- temporary worker with extraordinary abilities in the sciences
- TN Visa -- NAFTA professional

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

Location of Work
Awards are limited to non-profit institutions such as medical, osteopathic and dental schools, veterinary schools, schools of public health, pharmacy schools, nursing schools, universities and colleges, public and voluntary hospitals and other non-profit institutions that can demonstrate the ability to conduct the proposed research. Applications will not be accepted for work with funding to be administered through any federal institution or work to be performed by a federal employee with the exception of Veterans Administration employees.

Budget/Annual Award Amount

Salary/Fringe: Up to $35,000 for salary/fringe of the PI

Indirect: 10 percent ($6,364)

Project Support: Project-related expenses, such as salaries of essential professional and nonprofessional personnel with or without doctoral degrees, supplies, equipment, travel, volunteer subject costs, publication costs. Travel is not to exceed $3,000/year. Special consultative services from individuals may be requested, provided the costs and circumstances are fully described in the application

Collaborating investigators may not receive salary from these funds.

Direct costs: $63,636

Total Annual Award Amount: $70,000

Duration: Two years. A new application may be submitted during the final year, if PI meets eligibility criteria. AHA allows a maximum of four years of Beginning Grant-in-Aid support.

Peer Review Criteria
To judge the merit of the application, reviewers will comment on the following criteria. Please be sure that you fully address these in your proposal.

1. Future Independence of Investigator: Is there demonstrated evidence that the award will promote independent status for the applicant? The award is not intended to provide enhanced funding for professional personnel working on the research program of an established scientist.

2. Significance: Does this study address an important problem broadly related to cardiovascular disease or stroke? If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge or clinical practice be
advanced? What will be the effect of these studies on the concepts, methods and technologies that drive this field?

3. **Approach**: Are the conceptual framework, design, methods and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, well reasoned and feasible (as determined by preliminary data), and appropriate to the aims of the project? The assessment of preliminary data should be put into perspective such that bold new ideas and risk-taking on the part of beginning investigators are encouraged rather than stymied. Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?

4. **Innovation**: Is the project original and innovative? For example: Does the project challenge existing paradigms and address an innovative hypothesis or critical barrier to progress in the field? Does the project develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools or technologies for this area?

5. **Investigator**: Is the investigator appropriately trained and well suited to carry out this work? Is the work proposed appropriate to the experience level of the principal investigator and other researchers? Does the investigative team bring complementary and integrated expertise to the project (if applicable)?

6. **Environment**: Does the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Do the proposed studies benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, or subject populations, or employ useful collaborative arrangements? Is there evidence of institutional support as demonstrated in the department head letter?

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 are directed to notify the AHA if an applicant contacts them.

**Restrictions**

Investigators may submit one affiliate application per year. Investigators may simultaneously submit an application to the association's National Research Program. However, awardees may hold only one association award (affiliate or national) at one time.

- The amount of other research funding available to the principal investigator, at the time of award activation, may not exceed $150,000 annually (direct funds exclusive of PI salary/fringe and intramural funding).
- Grants will not be awarded to supplement or duplicate any work supported by other funding agencies. (The only exceptions are career development awards that essentially provide only salary and fringe benefits for the Principal Investigator.) After a grant application is reviewed, the overlapping or alternative designation of the project or the budget cannot be changed to accommodate any partial alternative funding.
- The purpose of these grants is not primarily to obtain new equipment. Any equipment request will be carefully scrutinized.
- An applicant who is unsuccessful in a competition may submit the same or similar application three times (the original plus two resubmissions**).
- Awardee may reapply for the Beginning Grant-in-Aid or may apply for the Scientist Development Grant, Established Investigator Award or Grant-in-Aid in final year.
- An individual may hold a Beginning Grant-in-Aid a maximum two times.

**Applying to National and an Affiliate**

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.*

**Success Rate** - all programs (Jan. 2010 award activation)

- # Applications Reviewed: 127
- # Applications Awarded: 22
- Success Rate: 17.32%
*Exception: An investigator may hold two association 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, and 3) there is no budgetary overlap between the two projects.

An investigator may hold the Innovative Research Grant and one other national or affiliate award.

**An applicant who is unsuccessful in a competition may resubmit the same or similar application three times (the original plus two resubmissions).