

Western States Affiliate Beginning Grant-in-Aid Program Description

Award Activation: January 1, 2012

Program Description, Eligibility and Peer Review Criteria

Objective

To promote the independent status of promising beginning scientists.

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

Target Audience

At the time of application, the applicant must:

- Hold a M.D., Ph.D., D.O., D.V.M. or equivalent post-baccalaureate doctoral degree initiating an independent research career.
- Meet institutional requirements for grant submission.

At the time of award activation, the applicant must:

- Hold a faculty/staff rank up to and including assistant professor (or equivalent), but may not have more than seven years of experience at the assistant professor level (or equivalent).

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
- 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

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 Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah or 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 Administration employees.

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

Budget/Annual Award Amount

Salary/Fringe: Up to \$35,000 (50 percent of the total award) for applicant salary/fringe benefits. Collaborating investigators or others with faculty appointments may not receive salary from these funds.

Indirect: 10 percent

Project Support: Project-related expenses, such as salaries of essential technical personnel, supplies, equipment, travel, volunteer subject costs, publication costs; PI salary, consistent with percent effort and dollar cap. Support toward salaries of professional and nonprofessional personnel with or without doctoral degrees may be budgeted. Special consultative services from individuals may be requested, provided the costs and circumstances are fully described in

the application. The purpose of this grant is not primarily to obtain new equipment. Any equipment request will be carefully scrutinized.

Travel: \$3,000 per year maximum

Total Annual Award Amount: \$70,000

Award Duration: Two years

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 must notify the AHA if an applicant contacts them.

Restrictions

- 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.
- At the time of award activation, the applicant may not have more than seven years of experience at the assistant professor level (or equivalent).
- An individual may hold the Innovative Research Grant and one other National or Affiliate award.
- 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.
- Awards are not intended to supplement or duplicate currently funded work. Minor variations from existing research projects are not sufficient to constitute independent and distinct project.
- The amount of research funding available to the principal investigator at time of award activation may not exceed \$150,000 annually. This includes direct funds, and does not include PI salary/fringe and intramural funding.
- An individual may hold a Beginning Grant-in-Aid a maximum of two times.

- 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.