

Predoctoral Fellowship

Application Deadlines:

- **Founders Affiliate - July 28, 2016**
- **Great Rivers Affiliate - July 28, 2016**
- **Greater Southeast Affiliate - July 27, 2016**
- **Midwest Affiliate - July 28, 2016**
- **SouthWest Affiliate - July 27, 2016**
- **Western States Affiliate - July 27, 2016**

Award Activation: Jan. 1, 2017

The application must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. Central Time in Grants@Heart on the deadline date. The application will be submitted to the designated grant officer, who will submit it to the American Heart Association (AHA).

Program Description, Eligibility and Peer Review Criteria

Success Rates

Objective

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

Science Focus

Research broadly related to cardiovascular disease and stroke and pertinent clinical, basic, bioengineering and biotechnology, public health, and multidisciplinary efforts.

Target Audience, Eligibility

At the *time of application*, the applicant must:

- be a full-time post baccalaureate, predoctoral M.D., Ph.D., D.O., D.V.M. (or equivalent) student who seeks research training with a sponsor/mentor prior to embarking on a research career.
- have completed initial coursework and be able to devote full-time effort to research or activities related to development into independent researcher.

Sponsor

It is imperative that the fellow receive counsel and direction from a sponsor who is an established investigator invested in the progress of the project.

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

Citizenship

At the time of application, the applicant 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
- G-4 Visa - family member of employee of international organizations

The awardee must maintain one of the designations listed above throughout the duration of the award.

Location of Project

The project must be conducted at any accredited institution in one of the following affiliates:

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

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

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

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 other institutions that can demonstrate the ability to conduct the proposed research. Applications proposed by federal institution or employees will not be accepted, except for applications to the AHA's Cardiovascular Genome Phenome Study ("CVGPS"), and applications from Veterans Administration employees.

Funding is prohibited for projects conducted at institutions outside the United States.

Budget

Stipend: \$22,950 annually

Health Benefits: \$1,000 annually for health insurance

Annual Project Support: \$2,000 annually for travel, computer, equipment, etc.

Duration: Two years

Total Award Amount: \$51,900

Restrictions

- The awardee may not hold more than one AHA award concurrently. However, the awardee may apply for a Postdoctoral Fellowship award (if eligible) during the final award year.
- The applicant may not have a faculty or staff position.
- The applicant may submit only one affiliate application per deadline. If eligible, the applicant may submit an application to both an affiliate and the Association-wide funding components. If both applications are funded, the applicant must choose one award.
- The awardee may not hold a comparable award as a source of supplementation.
- The applicant may submit the same or similar application three times (the original plus two **resubmissions**). The same or similar application submitted the fourth time will be administratively withdrawn.
- A sponsor/co-sponsor may mentor no more than two AHA-funded fellows (predoctoral and postdoctoral) concurrently. Fellows who are part of an AHA Strategically Focused Research Network are excluded.
- Submission of a Predoctoral Fellowship application that contains content that is identical or significantly similar to that of the sponsor's grant application is prohibited. Both applications will be recommended for disapproval. However, both applications may be funded if aims are not duplicated.

Peer Review Criteria

An applicant is prohibited from contacting AHA peer reviewers. This is a form of scientific misconduct and will result in removal of the application from funding consideration and institutional notification of misconduct.

To judge the merit of the application, reviewers will comment on each of the following criteria. Each criterion will account for one-third of the overall score.

Criterion 1 - Evaluation of the Investigator (Predoctoral Fellow)

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

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

An award will require annual progress reports to be submitted by both the Fellow and the sponsor, including narrative description of accomplishments related to research and training, as well as an inventory of any abstracts and publications produced.