

Predocutorial Fellowship

Application Deadline: Thursday, February 9, 2017

Applications must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. CDT on the deadline date. The system will shut down at 5:00 p.m. CDT. Early submission is encouraged. Your institutional Grants Officer (GO) has the final responsibility of submitting your completed application to the American Heart Association. It is important that you check with your GO for his/her internal deadline.

Award Activation: July 1, 2017

Program Description, Eligibility and Peer Review Criteria

Success Rates

Objective

To provide predoctoral students with individualized, mentored research training to initiate careers in cardiovascular and stroke research

Science Focus

All basic, clinical, and population research broadly related to cardiovascular disease and stroke.

Disciplines

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

Target Audience

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

- be a post baccalaureate, pre-doctoral Ph.D. (or equivalent) student who seeks research training with a sponsor/mentor prior to embarking on a research career.
- be a full-time student working towards his/her degree.
- have completed initial coursework and be at the stage of the doctoral program where he/she can devote full-time effort to research or activities related to the development into an independent researchers.

Sponsor

It is imperative that the fellow receives counsel and direction from a sponsor who is an established investigator interested 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.

AHA does not require but strongly encourages institutions to develop and use Individual Development Plans (IDPs) for AHA training programs. IDPs provide a structure for the identification and achievement of career goals.

The trainee's career goals as stated in Part A - Personal Statement of the fellow's biosketch and the sponsor's training plan must be complementary to one another and focused specifically on the individual. A standardized training plan will not be viewed favorably.

Citizenship

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

- U.S. citizen
- Permanent resident
- Pending permanent resident (any resident who has an approved I-765 form and has submitted an I-485 application with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services)
- 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 and NATO

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

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

Location of Work

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 applications to the AHA's Institute for Precision Cardiovascular Medicine, and applications from Veterans Administrations employees.

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

Budget

Annual Budget

Trainee Stipend/Salary: \$23,844, plus \$1,000 per year for health insurance

Project Support: \$2,000 per year, in addition to the stipend. No limit on any line item (travel, computer, equipment, etc.).

International travel is permitted and does not require prior AHA approval.

Award Duration: Two years

Total Award Amount: \$53,688

Restrictions

- The sponsor/co-sponsor may mentor no more than two AHA-funded fellows (pre-doctoral and postdoctoral) concurrently. Fellows who are part of an AHA Strategically Focused Research Network are excluded.
- A predoctoral fellow may hold only one AHA award at a time.
- This award is not for individuals of faculty/staff rank.
- An applicant may submit only one Predoctoral Fellowship application per deadline.
- The fellow may not hold a comparable award as a source of supplementation. An applicant who receives AHA funding, but has an ongoing fellowship from another source, may defer the start of the AHA award up to six months in order to complete the existing fellowship.
- A Predoctoral Fellow may not hold another Association award concurrently with the Predoctoral Fellowship. However, the fellow may apply for a Postdoctoral Fellowship award in the last year of the Predoctoral Fellowship.
- Submission of an application to the AHA with identical or significantly similar content as a submission by another investigator is prohibited. Also, the submission of an application to the AHA with identical or significantly similar content from a sponsor to a grant program and his/her fellow to fellowship program is prohibited. In such cases, both applications may be removed from funding consideration. If a grant application is submitted by the sponsor of a fellowship application, both applications may be funded if there is no duplication of aims.
- Students enrolled in an M.D./Ph.D. program should apply to the Clinical Health Profession Student Training.

Peer Review Criteria

Contacting AHA peer reviewers concerning your application is deemed a form of scientific misconduct and will result in the removal of your application from funding consideration and institutional notification of ethical concerns.

In order to judge the merit of the application, reviewers will comment on the following criteria. Please be sure to address these in your proposal. Each criterion will account for one-third of the overall score.

Criterion 1 - Evaluation of the Investigator (Predoctoral Fellow)

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

Criterion 2 - Sponsor/Training Plan and Environment

Because the fellow receives only a stipend from the 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 demonstrate familiarity with the applicant's career and developmental goals and provide a comprehensive training plan that supports 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

This section should provide a research project summary no longer than five pages: A carefully planned, systematic study aimed at clearly answering a question in cardiovascular and/or stroke health research. It should be completed in collaboration with the proposed supervisor(s) and be written in general scientific language.

Note: It is not the project per se that is being assessed. The project should be viewed as an integral part of the candidate's development as a researcher.

A new fellow may not have had adequate time to generate preliminary data. Applicants may 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.

1. Is the proposed project appropriate for the candidate, given his/her education, experience and interests? Is the project the right balance of challenge, importance of the research question, and feasibility in relation to the candidate's experience and training?
2. Does the proposed research project summary:
 - o Include the specific hypothesis of the research and describe the candidate's role on the project;
 - o Provide a concise account of the subject matter, an overview of each part of the research plan, specific project aims and the methodology;
 - o Reflect the significance of the project.
 - o For all applications that include vertebrate animals or human subjects, applicants must explain how relevant biological variables, such as sex, are factored into the research design, analysis and reporting. Furthermore, strong justification from the scientific

literature, preliminary data, or other relevant considerations, must be provided for applications proposing to study only one sex

3. **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 - AHA requires both the fellow and sponsor to submit annual progress reports that include narrative description of accomplishments related to research and training, as well as an inventory of any abstracts and publications produced.

Evaluation of Program - Publications, citations by others, awardee's advancement to a postdoctoral fellowship, appointment to a faculty position and/or other evidence of career progression, contribution of Association support to career advancement.