

AHA Research Award Application Instructions

For the following programs:

AHA Institutional Research Enhancement Award
Institutional Undergraduate Research Fellowship
Established Investigator Award
Merit Award
AHA Predoctoral Fellowship
AHA Postdoctoral Fellowship
Career Development Award
Collaborative Sciences Award
Innovative Project Award
Transformational Project Award

This document will be updated as Grants@Heart opens for applications to additional programs.

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[Click the item below to be linked to that section](#)

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AHA Mission

The American Heart Association is building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke. All applications for research funding will be assessed for their potential impact on the AHA mission.

Preface

Thank you for your interest in applying for research funding from the American Heart Association (AHA). This guide is intended to assist you with the successful preparation and submission of your application. Click on the question marks (?) throughout the application sections for instructions, help text and links.

The AHA uses a Web-based tool, [Grants@Heart](#), to manage the entire application process. The system is available to all AHA research customers, including applicants, grants officers, fiscal officers, peer reviewers, awardees and more. The system is accessible 24/7.

AHA Policies Governing All Research Applications and Awards

Policies on the following topics govern all AHA research applications and awards. Visit the [policies web page](#) for full information.

- Open Science Policies for AHA-funded research
- Patent, Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer Policy
- Standards on Falsification of Scientific Data, Plagiarism and Scientific Misconduct
- Privacy Statement: Policy on Collection and Use of Personal Information
- American Heart Association Policy on Support of Stem Cell Research
- Ethical Aspects of Research with Human Subjects and Animals
- Family, Medical or Military Leave for Awardees
- Investigator Financial Disclosure Policy/Objectivity in Research

Contact Us

AHA research staff is available Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 p.m. Central Time to assist with the application process and to answer questions. Contact us by emailing apply@heart.org or by calling 214- 360- 6107, option 1. We will reply as quickly as possible.

Getting Started

Funding Opportunities

Program descriptions of funding opportunities are generally posted on the AHA website several months prior to the application deadline. The program descriptions contain important information that will help you determine which program is right for you. Review the posted program descriptions to ensure that you have the most up-to-date program requirements. [View descriptions](#) of the AHA research programs.

AHA advises beginning the application process early. The applicant is responsible for preparing the application and working with all parties associated with the application to ensure timely submission by the application deadline date.

Each applicant must be either an American Heart Association Professional Member (memberships start under \$100) or pay \$250 per application submission. Professional Membership includes free research application submissions. Applicants may renew or join membership via the Grants@Heart application site. You may also join or renew by phone at 301-223-2307 or 800-787-8984. **There is a 3-5 day waiting period to process membership. Do not wait until the application deadline to renew or join.**

Forms and instructions are updated for each deadline. Review the currently required [Supporting Documents](#) for each program.

System Requirements

Applications are submitted to the AHA through the online system [Grants@Heart](#). It is accessible from any location with Internet capabilities, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except for scheduled maintenance.

Note: [Grants@Heart](#) will time out after 30 minutes of inactivity. Save your work often; you will be required to save each section before you will be able to move to another.

Accessing Grants@Heart

An individual must be registered as a Principal Investigator in [Grants@Heart](#) to apply for research funding.

1. First-time Applicants

First-time applicants must register from the [Grants@Heart](#) login page. Select "First time applicant, please register here". Data fields marked with red asterisks are required to complete registration. Your e-mail address will be your user ID. After completing registration, you will have access to create an application.

2. Returning Users/Applicants

Returning users should use their existing user ID (e-mail address) and password. If information your profile has changed (i.e. institution, academic position, etc.), you **MUST** update your profile before completing the questionnaire for a new application. The fields related to the profile will fill in automatically and cannot be changed.

If you already have a role in Grants@Heart other than Principal Investigator (i.e. Peer Reviewer), do not re-register. This will create another account. Rather, add the Principal Investigator role to your existing account. If you have questions about how to add a role to your existing account, please contact our office at apply@heart.org or 214-360-6107, option 2.

The user ID and password are case sensitive. If you do not remember your login information, click "Did you forget your ID or Password?" After the fifth failed attempt, your account may be locked for up to two hours.

First-time Grants Officer/Fiscal Officer should register with the link labeled, "Grants/Fiscal Officer" under the log in section for first time users.

Login Issues

If you are having trouble logging into Grants@Heart, please review the following troubleshooting tips. If you are unable to resolve your login issues, please contact us at 214-360-6107 **option 2** or login@heart.org.

Message: Your username/password is incorrect.

- Usernames/passwords are case sensitive.
- Your username is your email address.
- If you cannot remember your username and/or password, click on "Did you forget your ID or password?" on the Grants@Heart display page.

If you have created a security question, answer the question correctly to be granted access to the site. If you have not created a security question, the login information will be sent to your e-mail address. You must have access to the e-mail address you identified in your Grants @Heart profile. If you no longer have access to the e-mail address, contact the AHA at login@heart.org for assistance.

NOTE: After the fifth failed attempt to log into Grants @Heart, the system will lock you out for up to two hours.

Message: Your session has expired.

The system will time out after 30 minutes of inactivity. You will see a message that your session has expired. You must login again. If your session expires, you may lose any unsaved data. Save your data often.

Perform the following steps to refresh your browser for PC users:

- Close all instances of Internet Explorer. Open a new Internet Explorer browser. Type the Web address directly into the URL field -- <http://research.americanheart.org>.
- If you still receive the message, "Your session has expired," then go to Tools, Internet Options, and under Temporary Internet Files, click on Delete Cookies. In the Delete Files dialog box, click to select the Delete all offline content check box, then click OK.
- Restart your computer.

Perform the following steps to refresh your browser for Mac users:

- Close all instances of Safari. Open a new Safari browser. Type the Web address directly into the URL field -- <http://research.americanheart.org>.
- If you still receive the message, "Your session has expired," then click on the Safari tab, then Empty Cache. When the dialog box appears, and asks if you're sure you want to empty the cache, click Empty.
- Restart your computer.

Application Preparation

Some required documents may be prepared prior to creating the application in Grants@Heart. Adherence is mandatory to the page limits and format requirements outlined in the “Formatting and Page Requirements” section of this guide. No applicant should have an advantage over other applicants by providing more content in his/her application by using smaller, denser type.

Internet Web site addresses (URLs) may not be used to provide information necessary to the review because reviewers are under no obligation to view the Internet sites. Moreover, AHA reviewers are cautioned not to directly access an Internet site, as it could compromise their anonymity. The only place a URL may be used is in the biographical sketch as described in the instructions for that form.

The AHA has the responsibility to make final determination of conformance to format requirements and the authority to withdraw applications. **This decision is final and not subject to appeal.**

Required documents for each program can be found on the [supporting documents page](#). Content cannot be modified or changed once an application is submitted to AHA. Only the required documents for submission will be accepted. Additional or supplemental documents will not be accepted.

Creating an Application

To start a new application, select Application Administration and then Create New Application from the menu on the left side of the screen.

1. Questionnaire

The first step of the application process is to create a new application and complete the eligibility questionnaire. The questionnaire helps to determine whether you are applying to the correct program based on your professional and academic career stage. Review the [program description](#) of the program to which you are applying.

If you answer the questionnaire correctly, you will be granted access to complete the application. If you miss a question, you will receive an email message with instructions for explaining the response(s). Please give a full explanation and assurance, rather than simply saying that you answered incorrectly.

PLEASE NOTE: Our staff is monitoring the questionnaires. Someone will contact you regarding the explanation you provided to the incorrect response. If the explanation is acceptable, you will be allowed to continue with the application process.

After beginning an application, when you return to the system to continue working on your proposal, you will select Manage Existing Application from the left navigation and click the Update button next to your proposal.

2. Copy Application

Certain items from a previous application can be copied to your new application. The previous application must be in Pending or Unfunded status. When you begin the application process and successfully complete the questionnaire, you will be asked if you would like to copy a previous application. Select “Yes”. You may be asked if you would like to mark the application as a resubmission. Select the application in the list that you would like to copy and click Copy.

The items copied over are:

- Advanced Profile

- Project Summary
- Science & Evaluation Information uploads
- Research Classification
- Science Classification

You should review the information that is copied over and modify anything that has changed. You should pay attention to the Science Classification section as there may be changes in the choices since the last application cycle.

What it does not copy:

- Institutional Personnel
- Third Party Personnel
- Co-authors
- Budget
- Funds Available
- Research Subjects
- Third Party Supporting Documents

You must enter new data and upload the document for each of the referenced sections.

3. Multiple Submissions

A PI may submit only one application per program type in a fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). Exception: An applicant may submit more than one Innovative Project Award application, each with clearly distinct aims.

Regarding applications from different program types in the same fiscal year:

- An individual may hold more than one AHA award concurrently, but may only hold one career development/recognition award (Career Development Award, Established Investigator Award, Merit Award).
- Strategically Focused Research Network personnel may also hold individual AHA awards. However, an AHA Postdoctoral Fellowship applicant who is designated as an SFRN fellow during the review cycle must withdraw his/her individual application. SFRN fellows are not eligible to apply for an individual fellowship.

If you have a pending application in Grants@Heart, after you successfully complete the questionnaire, you will be asked if you want to mark the application as a multiple submission. Answer “Yes” to copy your pending application into this new application form.

4. Resubmission

Some AHA programs permit resubmission of the same or similar application (similar aims) as one submitted in a previous cycle. An applicant who is unsuccessful in competition may submit the same or similar application three times (the original plus two resubmissions). If major changes are made to the application or if this is an entirely different/new project, it should **not** be checked as a resubmission.

The same or similar application submitted for the fourth time will be withdrawn.

It is not acceptable to resubmit an application originally submitted by another investigator. Such applications may be withdrawn or disapproved.

While a new proposal may be based on a previous one, in 2017-18, the resubmission option will not

be available for the following programs:

- AHA Predoctoral Fellowship
- Career Development Award
- Established Investigator Award
- Transformational Project Award
- AHA Postdoctoral Fellowship
- Collaborative Sciences Award
- Innovative Project Award
- Merit Award

Resubmission will be available only for applications to the Institutional Undergraduate Student Fellowship Program, and the AHA Institutional Research Enhancement Award (AIREA).

To mark your application as a Resubmission, you must answer "Yes" when asked "Do you want to copy a previous application?" You must also answer "Yes" when asked, "Do you want to copy for resubmission?" Click the button next to the application you wish to resubmit and click Copy.

Pay close attention and respond correctly: A resubmitted application will include a section for uploading a resubmission document and will pre-populate some of the fields with existing application information. If you answer "No", the appropriate sections may not appear in your application.

Review the Science/Evaluation Information section to confirm the application was marked as a resubmission. It will have a section to upload a Resubmission Modifications document.

To have the benefit of critiques from the previous submission, a resubmitted application will be assigned to at least one of the primary reviewers that it was assigned to in the previous round, whenever possible. Reviewers for resubmitted applications will be provided with the critiques and scores from the previous round for reference.

If you intended to mark your application as a resubmission, but do not see the Resubmission section, go to the Project Summary section and click the link below the project summary text box to mark the application as a resubmission. You must answer "Yes" to the question to copy a previously submitted application. Select the application you wish to copy and click Copy. You will be returned to the Project Summary section. Go back to the Science/Evaluation Information section and check to see if the Resubmission tab was added at the bottom of the page.

5. Administrative Assistant Access

Grants@Heart does not have an administrator or assistant role. Only the applicant can enter data into the fields and upload specific documents into the application. There is no "sharing" mechanism.

6. Formatting and Page Requirements

All uploaded documents must follow the AHA's format and type requirements below:

- Document must be single-spaced.
- No more than 15 characters per inch (cpi) or an average of no more than 15 cpi (cpi includes symbols, punctuation and spaces).
- No less than ¾" page margins on all four sides,
- Maximum of 60 lines per page. (The average number of lines per page using the font and point size below will be 50-55 lines.)
- Arial Font style, 12 point font size for Windows users; Helvetica Font style, 12 point font size for Macintosh users.
- Only Portable Document Format (pdf) files are accepted by the Grants@Heart system.

It is not necessary to number your pages or to put your name on every page.

The Application Sections

The sections of the application and the required document uploads vary by program. Required documents for each program are listed on the [Supporting Documents](#) page. To follow the standard flow of the application, click "Continue" at the bottom of each page. You may also select the section you wish to work on by clicking on it in the menu on the left side of the screen.

Question marks throughout the application contain instructions for each section. You must save each section as you complete it.

If you upload an incorrect document prior to submitting the application to your grants officer, repeat the upload task and select the correct document. The new document will replace old one upon saving.

1. Advanced Profile

In this section, you will provide information about you, your academic career, professional time, citizenship, location of work for the research project and college degrees. The information in the section labeled Profile – Personal is pre-populated based on the information you entered when you registered. To update or change this, click "Profile Manager" at the top of the screen at any time prior to application submission.

To locate your institution in the drop-down, type part of the name or type your state. If your institution is in a foreign country, type in the name of the country.

An institution's street address, phone number, and zip code cannot be changed.

To change your institution in the Advanced Profile, go to Profile Manager and uncheck the box to use your current institution as the institution where work will be done. Select a different institution and save.

2. Project Summary

Enter the title of your project, not to exceed 120 letters and spaces. Do not use abbreviations unless absolutely necessary.

The project summary should be a brief synopsis of the proposed project and must be completed in the space provided. You cannot enter special characters or formatting (such as super- or subscripts, Greek symbols, italics, underlining, bolding, etc.) into this form field. Include the following: 1) a statement of specific aims, 2) the methods or techniques to be used, including the model to be used (animal, tissue culture, etc.), and 3) the end points or objectives to be achieved.

If your application is a resubmission, use the same project title that was used in the previous application.

NOTE: Instructions for the project summary may vary depending on the type of program. Click the Question Mark on the screen next to the Project Summary section heading.

Innovative Project Award ONLY:

AHA reserves the right to an initial streamlining, whereby up to half of the submissions may be streamlined with no reviewer comments and no peer review score. An initial streamlining process will be based on the project summary only. Therefore, Innovation and Impact should be specifically addressed in the project summary, rather than the standard abstract style that focuses mainly on approach. Reviewers will focus specifically on the following criteria for an initial streamlining.

1. Innovation: Is the project innovative for the investigator and not a logical next-step? Is the project original and have the potential to ultimately lead to critical discoveries or major advancements that will accelerate the field of cardiovascular or stroke research? For example: Does the project challenge existing paradigms and present an innovative hypothesis or address a critical barrier to progress in the field? Does the project develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools, or technologies for this area?

2. Impact: Assessment of project's impact to the field of cardiovascular or stroke research -- Does the project have high probability of a sustained and powerful influence on the research field(s)? How does this project relate to and support the mission of the American Heart Association of building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke?

3. Science Classification

Choose the classifications that most closely match your science. This information is used as part of the peer review committee selection. Choose BOTH a Major Classification 1 and 2. Your first choice should most closely match your proposal.

Sub-classifications are REQUIRED and help with peer review committee selection. Click here to view AHA's current [Science Categories](#).

If you checked "Yes" to translational and typed in the explanation box, but it doesn't save, shorten the explanation and save again. The explanation should be very brief.

4. Research Classification

The American Heart Association is frequently asked to categorize the research it is funding by several different categories. Requests can originate from donors, the public or our many volunteers. Please complete each of the classifications as they relate to your research project. The classifications are independent of each other and the classification of your research will not affect the peer review of your application.

5. Open Science

The AHA requires grant applicants to include a data sharing plan as part of the application process. Any research data that is needed for independent verification of research results must be made freely and publicly available within 12 months of the end of the funding period (and any no-cost extension). Specified early-career awards are exempt from this policy. The programs that are currently exempt are the Institutional Undergraduate Student Award, AHA Predoctoral Fellowship, and AHA Postdoctoral Fellowship. Program descriptions for other award types will state if the application is exempt from the Open Science Policy, for all other programs, if a data sharing plan is not included as part of the application, the applicant must provide an "opt-out" request that includes rationale for why it is unnecessary or inappropriate. "Opt-out" requests will be evaluated according to established guidelines.

6. Institutional Personnel

Institutional personnel are associated with the Applicant's (Principal Investigator's) institution, and include the Grants Officer, Fiscal Officer and Immediate Supervisor. These personnel will not need to provide supporting documentation for the application.

The institution you select for Where Work Will be Done controls the list of choices of Grants Officer and Fiscal Officer. Contact your grants office to be sure you select the correct Grants Officer from the list – this is important because the Grants Officer is responsible for final submission of the application to the AHA. **Selecting the incorrect person may result in your application not getting submitted to AHA by the established deadline.**

If the person you have been instructed to select is not on the list, confirm the following:

- The institution name in Where Work Will Be Done must exactly match the institution name associated with your Grants Officer.
- Confirm that the Grants Officer has registered as an institutional officer (and not as an applicant) in Grants@Heart.

If you chose the wrong Grants Officer and submitted your application:

- If the Grants Officer listed in the application can see the application, he/she should reject it. The application will be returned to you. Change the Grants Officer to the correct person.
- If the Grants Officer is not available to reject the application, contact AHA staff at 214-360-6107 option 1.

7. Third Party Personnel

The applicant must identify the people associated with the application and their roles in the project.

Required Third Party Personnel: Some third-party roles are required by a program. These sections will appear automatically in the application. You must upload the required documents for these roles to be able to submit the application.

Optional Third Party Personnel: Other third party roles are optional and may be added if needed (such as a collaborating investigator or consultant). The role must be added in the Third Party Personnel section to upload supporting documentation. If a role is not included in the drop-down list, it cannot be added to the application.

All third parties -- EXCEPT referents -- should complete their supporting documentation and send it to the applicant by email. The applicant must upload all supporting documents except referent letters, which are considered confidential. The application cannot be submitted without the supporting documentation, so you should notify third parties of your deadline for submitting the application.

NOTE: Referents sometimes have an extended deadline that is after the application submission deadline. Referent deadlines are in the [Program Descriptions](#) and on [the Referent Information page](#).

a. Collaborating Investigator

A collaborating investigator contributes in a substantive way to the scientific development or execution of the project.

Typically, a Collaborating Investigator has a doctoral or other professional degree and would devote a specific percent of effort to the project. The collaborating investigator must provide supporting documentation for the research application. View details for [collaborating investigators](#).

b. Consultant

A Consultant contributes to the scientific development or execution of the project in a discrete way; typically, a Consultant has a doctoral or other professional degree. A Consultant may provide discrete services that are performed in a limited window of time or occasionally contribute a specific method/technique/analysis or materials for the project.

For Fellowship Awards, the services of a consultant are not routine and should only be listed where the consultant is essential to the proposed research training experience. View details for [consultants](#).

c. Department Head

The Department Head provides information about the applicant's academic appointment, career stage, support from the institution, etc. Download the template for the [Department Head Letter](#).

d. Mentor for the Career Development Award

The role of a mentoring team member is to work with the applicant to develop the application and to make all necessary arrangements for conducting the proposed research work with the institution. Each member of the mentoring team must provide supporting documentation required by the American Heart Association for the research application.

The Department Head may serve as a member of the mentoring team.

A consultant or collaborator may not also be named as a member of the mentoring team.

View the [Mentoring Team for the Career Development Award Information Page](#).

e. Sponsor

A sponsor is a senior investigator under whom the research project of an AHA Predoctoral or Postdoctoral Fellowship will be performed. A sponsor is the administrative link with the institution. The sponsor offers supervisory or collaborative assistance necessary for the progress of the research program. A sponsor must be familiar with an applicant's area of research. View the [sponsor detail page](#).

f. Co-Sponsor

A joint sponsor of an AHA Predoctoral or Postdoctoral Fellowship applicant has the same responsibilities described above for the sponsor. Inclusion of a co-sponsor is considered an exceptional circumstance. Since the co-sponsor is an optional third party, the applicant must add co-sponsor section to the Third Party section. The co-sponsor should provide the same documentation as the sponsor.

g. Referent

A referent is an individual familiar with the applicant's scientific interests and abilities. Please visit our website for information about the referent upload process and to download a template of the [Reference Report form](#).

h. Co-Principal Investigator

The role of Co-Principal Investigator is only ONLY for the Collaborative Sciences Award. The American Heart Association recognizes only one Principal Investigator for all other programs. An investigator contributing to your project may be listed as a Collaborating Investigator.

8. Summary for Non-scientists

All applications for research funding will be assessed for their potential impact on the AHA mission. This potential impact assessment will be based primarily on the Summary for Non-scientists. The summary will be reviewed for mission impact during the peer review process and may be assessed by a lay reviewer. *A lay reviewer is an individual who does not have formal training as a scientist, and who has a strong interest in advancing the prevention and/or management of heart disease and stroke.* In the AHA peer review process, lay reviewers specifically help evaluate the potential impact of research applications on the mission of the AHA.

Applicants must state the potential impact of their proposed work on the AHA mission clearly and in language that can be understood by a non-scientist.

It is incumbent upon the applicant to make a clear link between the project and the mission of the AHA. The lay summary will be assessed in terms of potential impact on the AHA mission; this will be factored into the overall priority score as noted in the peer review criteria.

Describe your work in a way that it will be understood by people who do not have scientific or medical backgrounds. Be clear and avoid technical and scientific terms when possible. It might help to imagine that you are explaining your work to a new acquaintance who does not work in the science field. Your summary should be no longer than one single-spaced page in length.

9. Budget

Applicants are encouraged to request the maximum annual amount and the maximum number of years for each award. All budgets for funded projects will require approval from the applicant's institution and the AHA.

The abbreviated budget in the online form is a requirement of the American Heart Association. If the applicant's institution requires detailed budget information, then the applicant should submit details to the institution's grants office. However, the Association will accept only the abbreviated budget format for application submission.

- *Fellowship Applications*

The application budget is fixed. The applicant is unable to modify or change it. Please review the program descriptions to determine the budget available for the program. AHA fellowships mirror the NIH stipend scale. The stipend amount will be determined by your years of postdoctoral experience.

AHA does not allow indirect costs to be taken by the institution on training grants that primarily provide stipend support. For programs in which indirect costs are permitted, an indirect costs field will be present on the budget form in your application.

- *Grant Applications*

The application budget may be edited. During the application process, the applicant is only required to enter the proposed amount for PI salary and fringe, project support and indirect costs. Please review the program description to determine limits for expense categories. If the project is funded, the investigator will be asked to submit a detailed budget prior to award activation.

10. Alternative and Overlapping Funding

American Heart Association research funds will not be awarded to supplement or duplicate any work which is being supported by other funding agencies. They are intended to represent support for a well-defined, well-described research project.

Alternative (pending or planned applications)

An application must be identified as alternative if submitted to more than one granting agency for the same or closely related project and/or in which there are duplicated budgetary requests. The applicant must indicate if the American Heart Association grant application is an alternative.

After the grant application is reviewed by the American Heart Association, the alternative designation of the project or the budget cannot be changed to accommodate any partial alternative funding. The applicant is not permitted to adjust the scientific aims or budget of an American Heart Association application to accommodate any overlap resulting from funding of an alternative application by another funding agency. The applicant can accept only one award if more than one is to be approved for funding. After award activation, if a subsequent funding agency eliminates all overlap (scientific and budgetary), the awardee may keep the association award, pending review and approval by the Research Committee.

Overlap (active or approved applications)

An award must be identified as overlapping if it supports the same or a closely related project and/or in which there are duplicated budgetary requests. The applicant must indicate if the association grant application has scientific or budgetary overlap with an active or approved award. The applicant can accept the association grant only if he/she relinquishes the overlapping award. Use of association funds to supplement budgets for a project that is already receiving a substantial amount of extramural support is contrary to established association standards. Arbitrary compartmentalization of a large well-supported project into a discrete segment to compete for association funds will be critically examined. Alternative/Overlap designation by Research Committee

Whether the applicant has declared an application as alternative or overlapping, the Research Committee may deem an application "alternative" (a pending award) or "overlapping" (with an active award) if there is any duplication of scientific aims or budget. One-hundred percent duplication between applications is not a requirement for an application to be deemed "overlapping."

List all research project support available to you (active, approved, or pending) for funding. List NIH project grants, NIH K awards, portions of NIH program projects, SCOR or Center grants, NIH contracts, Veterans Administration funds, NSF grants, NASA grants, contracts from industry, grants from other non-federal health agencies (including AHA components), any funds available to you through other Investigators, and departmental/institutional support.

Please do not mark departmental/institutional support as alternative to the AHA application.

The alternative designation of the project or the budget may not be changed to accommodate partial alternative funding from another source. The applicant is not permitted to adjust the scientific aims or budget of an AHA application to accommodate overlap resulting from funding of an alternative application by another funding agency. One hundred percent (100%) duplication between applications is not a requirement for an application to be deemed alternative or overlapping. The applicant may accept only one award if more than one is to be approved for funding. After award activation, if a subsequent funding agency eliminates all overlap (scientific and budgetary), the awardee may keep the Association award, pending review and approval by the Research Committee.

11. Science/Evaluation Information

The documents required in the Science/Evaluation Information section varies by program. The sections required for the application will be visible automatically. A list of the required documents with instructions, format and page requirements for all programs can be found on our website on the [Supporting Documents page](#). Applicants must comply with stated page limits for the program. A document that exceeds a program's page limit will be rejected by Grants@Heart.

Possible Science/Evaluation Sections:

A. Applicant/Principal Investigator Biographical Sketch/Bibliography

Use of the NIH biographical sketch is required for AHA programs. Applicants to AHA research programs should use the NIH biographical sketch PHS SF424 (R&R).

- > Applicants to fellowship programs should use the NIH **Fellowship** Applicant Biographical Sketch Format.
- > All others should use the NIH **General** Biographical Sketch Format.

Both formats appear on the next pages of these instructions.

Convert the biographical sketch to Portable Document Format (PDF) prior to uploading it to **Grants@Heart**. Do not exceed five pages for the entire Biographical Sketch (including bibliography).

For the Collaborative Science Award, each co-principal investigator should provide a biosketch. Each Co-PI must upload their own biosketch (5 page maximum per biosketch).

** A-TRAC Pilot Program Applicants: Please submit your 5-page NIH Biosketch with your application to [Anshula Kesh](#).

NIH Fellowship Biographical Sketch Format

OMB No. 0925-0001 and 0925-0002 (Rev. 10/15 Approved Through 10/31/2018)
 Provide the following information for the applicant (student/fellow/trainee). **DO NOT EXCEED FIVE PAGES.**
 Follow the formats and instructions below. Samples of completed NIH biosketches may be found on the NIH
 Web site.

NAME:

eRA COMMONS USER NAME (credential, e.g., agency login):

POSITION TITLE:

EDUCATION/TRAINING (Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add/delete rows as necessary.)

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE (if applicable)	START DATE MM/YYYY	END DATE (or expected end date) MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY

Personal Statement

Briefly describe why you are well-suited to receive the award for which you are applying. The relevant factors may include aspects of your training; your previous experimental work on this specific topic or related topics; your technical expertise; your collaborators or scientific environment; and your past performance in this or related fields. You may mention specific contributions to science not included here in Section 3.

In this section, applicants to the AHA Predoctoral Fellowship and AHA Postdoctoral Fellowship should state their career goals. Career goals should reflect the applicant’s true plans and are not required by AHA to be traditional academic or clinical research work.

Positions and Honors

List in chronological order all non-degree training, including postdoctoral research training, all employment after college, and any military service. Clinicians should include information on internship, residency and specialty board certification (actual and anticipated with dates) in addition to other information requested. This information is used in reviewing the application and in determining the stipend level for Postdoctoral Fellowships. State the Activity/Occupation and include start/end dates, field, name of institution/company, and the name of your supervisor/employer. If you are not currently located at the applicant organization, include your projected position at the applicant organization as well.

ACTIVITY/OCCUPATION	START DATE MM/YYYY	END DATE MM/YYYY	FIELD	INSTITUTION/COMPANY	SUPERVISOR/EMPLOYER

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Academic and Professional Honors

List any academic and professional honors that would reflect upon your potential for a research career and qualifications. Include all scholarships, traineeships, fellowships, and development awards. Indicate sources of awards, dates, and grant or award numbers. List current memberships in professional societies, if applicable.

Contributions to Science

Considering your level of experience, briefly describe your most significant contributions to science. While all applicants may describe up to five contributions, graduate students and post doctorates are encouraged to consider highlighting two or three they consider most significant. These may include research papers, abstracts, book chapters, reviews, as well as non- publication research products, such as materials, methods, models, or protocols. For each contribution, indicate the historical background that frames the scientific problem; the central finding(s); the relevance of the finding(s) to science, technology, or public health; and your specific role in the described work. For each contribution, you may reference up to four peer- reviewed publications or other non-publication research products (can list audio or video products; patents; data and research materials; databases; educational aids or curricula; instruments or equipment; models; protocols; and software or net ware) that are relevant to the described contribution. The description of each contribution should be no longer than one half page including figures and citations. Please also provide a URL to a full list of your published work as found in a publicly available digital database such as SciENcv or My Bibliography, which are maintained by the US National Library of Medicine.

Scholastic Performance

AHA permits Predoctoral Fellowship and Postdoctoral Fellowship applicants to scan and upload transcripts as an alternative to completing this section. If you opt to upload your transcript, please type in this section, "Please see Transcript." Go to the Academic Record section of the application to upload your transcript.

Predoctoral Fellowship applicants:

Using the chart provided, list by institution and year all undergraduate and graduate courses with grades. In addition, in the space following the chart, explain any marking system if other than 1-100, A, B, C, D, F, or 0-4.0 if applicable. Show levels required for a passing grade.

Postdoctoral Fellowship applicants:

Using the chart provided, list by institution and year all undergraduate courses and graduate scientific and/or professional courses germane to the training sought under this award with grades. In the space following the chart, explain any marking system if other than 1-100, A, B, C, D, F, or 0-4.0 if applicable. Show levels required for a passing grade.

YEAR	SCIENCE COURSE TITLE	GRADE	YEAR	OTHER COURSE TITLE	GRADE

NIH General Biosketch Format

OMB No. 0925-0001 and 0925-0002 (Rev. 10/15 Approved Through 10/31/2018)

Provide the following information for the senior/key personnel and other significant contributors. Follow this format for each person. **DO NOT EXCEED FIVE PAGES.** Follow the formats and instructions below. Samples of completed NIH biosketches may be found on the NIH Web site.

NAME:

eRA COMMONS USER NAME: (credential, e.g., agency login)

POSITION TITLE:

EDUCATION/TRAINING (Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add/delete rows as necessary.)

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE (if applicable)	COMPLETION DATE MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY

Personal Statement

Briefly describe why you are well-suited for your role in the project described in this application. The relevant factors may include aspects of your training; your previous experimental work on this specific topic or related topics; your technical expertise; your collaborators or scientific environment; and your past performance in this or related fields. You may mention specific contributions to science not included in Section 3.

Also identify up to four peer reviewed publications that specifically highlight your experience and qualifications for this project. If you wish to explain impediments to your past productivity, you may include a description of factors such as family care responsibilities, illness, disability, and active duty military service.

Positions and Honors

List in chronological order previous positions, concluding with the present position. List any honors.

Contribution to Science

Briefly describe up to five of your most significant contributions to science. For each contribution, indicate the historical background that frames the scientific problem; the central finding(s); the influence of the finding(s) on the progress of science or the application of those finding(s) to health or technology; and your specific role in the described work. For each of these contributions, reference up to four peer-reviewed publications or other non-publication research products (can include audio or video products; patents; data and research materials; databases; educational aids or curricula; instruments or equipment; models; protocols; and software or NetWare) that are relevant to the described contribution. The description of each contribution should be no longer than one half page including figures and citations. Also provide a URL to a full list of your published work as found in a publicly available digital database such as SciENcv or My Bibliography, which are maintained by the US National Library of Medicine.

Research Support

List both selected ongoing and completed research projects for the past three years (Federal or non-Federally-supported). *Begin with the projects that are most relevant to the research proposed in the application.* Briefly indicate the overall goals of the projects and responsibilities of the key person identified on the Biographical Sketch. Do not include number of person months or direct costs.

B. Career Development Plan

(3 pages maximum) - Applicants for the Career Development Award ONLY are required to submit a comprehensive career development plan that includes:

- Primary career intention – AHA does not require this to be a traditional academic research or health profession track. For example, an applicant might wish to pursue a career in industry, technology, teaching, or public health, etc.
- Long-term professional goals (such as positions desired or other specific professional goals, such as ‘write a book’).
- Explicit short-term goals that contribute to long-term interests and the most important anticipated challenges that must be mitigated/overcome to reach these goals.
- Timeline and 2-3 metrics that will define success in reaching each goal.
- Describe training or experiences you will develop to contribute to and ensure that long term goals are achieved.
- Describe which aspects of your current work/job will be delegated to others in order to accomplish the early career training and tasks necessary to achieve your goals.
- Identify additional skills, knowledge or experience you will need to acquire that may directly or indirectly help you in your current job or future positions, and how you plan to ensure that this occurs.
- Specifically delineate when and how progress assessments/checkpoints will occur, particularly with each member of your mentoring team (e.g., memos, phone calls, meetings) and what developmental activities will be completed or discussed at these times.
- Provide letters of support from each mentoring team member that indicate he/she understands his/her role and commitment to you as the early career investigator.

Resources -- AHA does not endorse particular resources. These resources are offered for applicants' reference.

[How and Why to Write a Career Development Plan | Robert Half](https://www.roberthalf.com/blog/how-and-why-to-write-a-career-development-plan)

<https://www.roberthalf.com/blog/how-and-why-to-write-a-career-development-plan>

[Guide to Writing a Career Development Plan](https://performancemanager.successfactors.com/doc/po/develop.../carguide.html)

<https://performancemanager.successfactors.com/doc/po/develop.../carguide.html>

C. Research Plan/Proposal

The Research Plan must be created as a Word document that is converted to a Portable Document Format (PDF) file. Only PDF files will be accepted by the Grants@Heart system. A document that exceeds the page limit will be rejected by the system.

The length of the Research Plan varies by program. Specific limits are listed in the next section of this document. Research plans that exceed the page limit cannot be uploaded. Address the Peer Review Criteria in your research plan. The criteria are listed in each Program Description.

Before beginning the Research Plan, review the **program description** noting especially the qualifications and any restrictions for the program to which you are applying. The Research Plan should address all of the peer review criteria, which are included in the **program description**.

Note: Submission of an application to the AHA with identical or significantly similar content as another investigator is prohibited. Although your project may study the same or a similar issue/problem as another investigator, your research proposal should be your own original/creative writing. You should cite all information taken from another researcher or publication. Failure to do so may result in your proposal being flagged for Ethical Disapproval due to plagiarism. Also, **the submission of applications with identical or significantly similar content from a sponsor to a project support program and his/her fellow to fellowship program is prohibited. Both applications will receive a recommendation for “disapproval”.** Applications submitted by a sponsor and his/her fellow may both be funded if there is no duplication of aims.

Type the research plan specifically following the outline given below for the program to which you are applying, in the same sequence. All items should be addressed. Indicate N/A or None if not applicable to this application. The suggested lengths (in parenthesis) are guidelines only; the entire proposed research plan must not exceed the page limit for the program to which you are applying. ***These instructions will be updated for subsequent program releases during the fiscal year.***

Institutional Undergraduate Student Fellowship Program

Requires an Implementation Plan, as outlined below (8-page limit).

1. Provide a history of the institution's student training program. Include a description of institutional support that is available to sponsors and students.
2. List the training opportunities available to students, including potential sponsors and brief details about their background and nature of their work.
3. Outline how potential student awardees will be identified and recruited. The student recruitment plan must be open to students at any school. The institution is strongly encouraged to recruit students from racial and ethnic groups that are underrepresented in science (Black/African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander).

Provide the procedure that sponsor/student teams will follow to compete for AHA funds granted to the institution.

4. Detail the enrichment activities that will be available to the student trainees.
5. Submit a plan for obtaining annual feedback from current and former trainees to assess the quality and effectiveness of the fellowship experience.

Strategically Focused Research Network

Refer to [the SFRN web page](#) for instructions.

AHA Institutional Research Enhancement Award (AIREA)

Proposed Research Plan, 12-page limit. Proposal will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. **Impact:** How does this project relate to and support the mission of the American Heart Association: Building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke?
2. **Significance:** Does this study address an important problem or barrier to progress that is 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? If funded, will the award have a substantial effect on the school/academic component in terms of strengthening the research environment and exposing students to research?
3. **Approach:** Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics? Does the application provide evidence that the project can stimulate the interests of students so that they consider a career in the biomedical or behavioral sciences? 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.
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? Does the investigative team bring complementary and integrated expertise to the project (if applicable)? Does the PI(s) have suitable experience in supervising students in research?
6. **Environment:** 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? Does the application demonstrate the likely availability of well-qualified students to participate in the research project? Does the application provide sufficient evidence that students have in the past or are likely to pursue careers in the biomedical or behavioral sciences?

Established Investigator Award

Proposed Research Plan, 10-page limit:

1. Describe past research accomplishments, the potential of the EIA to provide new directions and innovations, and broadly discuss projected research studies.
2. Application should not contain detailed protocols or focus heavily on the design or interpretation of individual experiments.
3. Clarify how this proposal differs from other funded projects, or how these funds will be used to

expand upon other projects.

Merit Award

After submitting a Letter of Intent, if you are invited to submit a full application, refer to this web page for detailed application instructions.

http://professional.heart.org/professional/ResearchPrograms/UCM_479715_Merit-Award-Invited-Applicant-Instructions.jsp

Science/Evaluation Section

1. Major Research Achievements (1 pg. limit)

A summary of the applicant's major research achievements. This should be written so that a non-scientist reviewer can readily understand the summary.

2. Ongoing and Planned Research Progress and Future Vision (8 pg. limit)

A summary of the applicant's ongoing and planned research program and a statement of why the AHA should support the applicant's research (not more than 8 pages; references and up to one page of figures are counted toward the page limit).

This section should build upon the letter of intent by focusing on how the proposed research would:

- transform and advance the future of CV and stroke science;
- move into emerging and/or difficult areas of inquiry, being consistently at its forefront;
- develop new tools and methods to support creative experimental approaches to questions; encompassing concepts or techniques from other disciplines;
- forge links between disparate disciplines;
- allow for collaboration with other distinguished scientists across disciplines;
- generate original and innovative contributions;
- assist the AHA in becoming a catalyst to achieving maximum impact in equitable health and wellbeing.

3. Summary of past efforts in support of the AHA programs and initiatives and plan for future service as an ambassador in support of the AHA mission (1 pg. limit)

4. Top 15 Bibliography (optional replacement)

You may leave the Top 15 Bibliography that you submitted for your Letter of Intent. If you wish to replace this document, please email a pdf of your revised list with your application ID number to apply@heart.org.

Supporting Documentation Section

Two references are required for those selected to submit a full application. Create two separate uploads. Each letter is limited to four pages.

AHA Predoctoral Fellowship and AHA Postdoctoral Fellowship

Proposed Research Plan – 5-page limit

Type the research plan specifically following the outline given below, in the same sequence. All items should be addressed. Indicate N/A or None if not applicable to this application. The entire proposed research plan must not exceed the five-page limit.

Important: If you are applying for only one year of support, it is important that you state this in the research

plan.

1. Specific Aims

Provide a clear, concise summary of the aims of the work proposed and its relationship to your long-term goals. State the hypothesis to be tested.

2. Background and Significance

Sketch the background leading to this application. Summarize important results outlined by others in the same field, critically evaluating existing knowledge. Identify gaps that this project is intended to fill.

State concisely the importance and relevance of the research to cardiovascular function or disease, stroke, or to related fundamental problems. Also, it is incumbent upon the applicant to make a clear link between the project and the mission of the AHA. The significance section will be assessed in terms of potential impact on the AHA mission; this will be factored into the overall priority score as noted in the peer review criteria.

3. Preliminary Studies

Describe concisely previous work related to the proposed research by the applicant that will help to establish the experience and competence of the investigator to pursue the proposed project. Include pilot studies showing the work is feasible. (If none, so state.)

4. Research Design and Methods

Description of proposed tests, methods or procedures should be explicit, sufficiently detailed, and well defined to allow adequate evaluation of the approach to the problem. Describe any new methodology and its advantage over existing methodologies.

Clearly describe overall design of the study, with careful consideration to statistical aspects of the approach, the adequacy of controls, and number of observations, as well as how results will be analyzed. Include details of any collaborative arrangements that have been made.

Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and alternative approaches to achieve the aims.

Note: If a proposed research project involves human subjects, the population sampled shall be inclusive of the general population, of relevance to the scientific question posed, without restriction in regard to gender, race, age, and socioeconomic status. Proposals that intentionally restrict the population sampled must include a compelling scientific rationale for such research design. Be sure to address this topic.

5. Ethical aspects of the proposed research

Describe any special consideration you have given to all ethical issues involved in your proposed investigations (biohazards or human subjects, etc.), identifying risks and management. Be sure to address this topic. If using animals, view the Vertebrate Animal Subjects instructions (section 14 of this document). Discuss the nature of the informed consent that will be obtained if the research involves human subjects. If the proposed project involves no ethical questions, indicate "5: NONE".

Career Development Award

12 page limit -- Address the following topics, and how the members of your Mentoring Team will assist with each aspect.

1. **Specific Aims**

Provide a clear, concise summary of the aims of the work proposed and its relationship to your long-term goals. State the hypothesis to be tested.

2. **Background and Significance**

Sketch the background leading to this application. Summarize important results outlined by others in the same field, critically evaluating existing knowledge. Identify gaps that this project is intended to fill.

State concisely the importance and relevance of the research to cardiovascular function or disease, stroke, or to related fundamental problems. Also, it is incumbent upon the applicant to make a clear link between the project and the mission of the AHA. The significance section will be assessed in terms of potential impact on the AHA mission; this will be factored into the overall priority score as noted in the peer review criteria.

3. **Preliminary Studies**

Describe concisely previous work related to the proposed research by the applicant that will help to establish the experience and competence of the investigator to pursue the proposed project. Include pilot studies showing the work is feasible. (If none, so state.)

4. **Research Design and Methods**

Description of proposed tests, methods or procedures should be explicit, sufficiently detailed, and well defined to allow adequate evaluation of the approach to the problem. Describe any new methodology and its advantage over existing methodologies.

Clearly describe overall design of the study, with careful consideration to statistical aspects of the approach, the adequacy of controls, and number of observations, as well as how results will be analyzed. Include details of any collaborative arrangements that have been made.

Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and alternative approaches to achieve the aims.

Note: If a proposed research project involves human subjects, the population sampled shall be inclusive of the general population, of relevance to the scientific question posed, without restriction in regard to gender, race, age, and socioeconomic status. Proposals that intentionally restrict the population sampled must include a compelling scientific rationale for such research design. Be sure to address this topic.

5. **Ethical Aspects of the Proposed Research**

Describe any special consideration you have given to all ethical issues involved in your proposed investigations (biohazards or human subjects, etc.), identifying risks and management. Be sure to address this topic. If using animals, visit the Vertebrate Animal Subjects instructions (section 14 of this document). Discuss the nature of the informed consent that will be obtained if the research involves human subjects. If the proposed project involves no ethical questions, indicate "5: NONE".

Collaborative Sciences Award

Proposed Research Plan, 12-page limit.

After submitting a Letter of Intent, **if you are invited to submit a full application:**

The proposal must expand on the Letter of Intent, detailing the collaborative relationship, such that the scientific objectives cannot be achieved without the efforts of at least two co-principal investigators and their respective disciplines and expertise. The combination and integration of studies may be inclusive of basic, clinical, population, behavioral, and/or translational research.

Proposal will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. **Collaboration:** It is incumbent upon the applicants to convey the **highly** novel nature of their relationship. Are the investigators from at least two widely disparate disciplines and/or areas of expertise? How does the proposed collaborative relationship strengthen or weaken the proposal? Does the proposal focus on the collaborative relationship, such that the scientific objectives could not be reached without the efforts of both principal investigators and both (or all) disciplines? Does the effort of each Co-PI reflect proper equity in the project?
2. **Investigators:** Does the investigative team bring diverse, complementary and integrated expertise to the project? Are the investigators appropriately trained and well suited to carry out this work? Is the work proposed appropriate to the experience levels of the principal investigators and other researchers? How does the investigators' previous work (may not be directly related to cardiovascular disease or stroke) strengthen and ensure the project's success?
3. **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?
4. **Approach:** Are the conceptual framework, design, methods and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, well-reasoned, feasible (as determined by preliminary data), and appropriate to the aims of the project? Is the project scope likely to be completed within the award period? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?
5. **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? Will the project foster or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools or technologies for this area? How does the diversity of disciplines and/or expertise of the collaborators make the innovation possible?
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?
7. **Impact:** How does this project relate to and support the mission of the American Heart Association to building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke?

Innovative Project Award

Proposed Research Plan, 5-page limit

AHA reserves the right to an initial streamlining, whereby up to half of the submissions may be streamlined with no reviewer comments and no peer review score. Of the remaining applications that will be peer reviewed, up to half will be streamlined and will receive reviewer comments. Therefore, **Innovation and Impact should be specifically addressed in the project summary, rather than the standard abstract style that focuses mainly on approach.** An initial streamlining process will be based on the project summary only.

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.

Reviewers will judge the proposal on the following criteria.

1. **Innovation** -- Assessment of project's innovative nature: Is the project innovative for the investigator and not a logical next-step? Is the project original and have the potential to ultimately lead to critical discoveries or major advancements that will accelerate the field of cardiovascular or stroke research? For example: Does the project challenge existing paradigms and present an innovative hypothesis or address a critical barrier to progress in the field? Does the project develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools, or technologies for this area?
2. **Impact** to the field of cardiovascular or stroke research: Does the project have high probability of a sustained and powerful influence on the research field(s)? How does this project relate to and support the mission of the American Heart Association to **build healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke**?
3. **Significance** to the field of cardiovascular or stroke research: Does this study address an important problem directly related to cardiovascular disease or stroke? If the aims of the application are achieved, will scientific knowledge or clinical practice be significantly impacted? Will there be an effect on the concepts, methods, and technologies that drive this field?
4. **Approach**: Are the conceptual framework, design, methods and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, well-reasoned and appropriate to the aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?
5. **Investigator**: Is the principal investigator appropriately trained and well suited to carry out this work even if a new area of investigation? Does the investigative team bring complementary, appropriately qualified, 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? Does the proposal demonstrate that resources will be available to complete the project? Do the proposed studies benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, or subject populations, or employ useful collaborative arrangements?

Transformational Project Award

Proposed Research Plan, 10-page limit

Reviewers will judge the proposal on the following criteria:

1. **Innovation**: Is this a highly innovative, high impact project, based on work in progress, that could ultimately lead to critical discoveries or major advancements that will accelerate the field of cardiovascular and stroke research? For example: Does the project challenge existing paradigms and present an innovative hypothesis or address a critical barrier to progress in the field? Does the project develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools, or technologies for this area?
2. **Impact**: Does the project have high probability to have a sustained and powerful influence on the research field(s)? How does this project relate to and support the mission of the American Heart Association to **build healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke**?
3. **Significance**: Does this study address an important problem directly related to cardiovascular disease or stroke? If the aims of the application are achieved, will scientific knowledge or clinical practice be significantly impacted? Will there be an effect on the concepts, methods, and technologies that drive this field?
4. **Approach**: Are the conceptual framework, design, methods and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, well-reasoned and appropriate to the aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?

5. **Investigator:** Is the investigator appropriately trained and well suited to carry out this work even if a new area of investigation? Does the investigative team bring complementary, appropriately qualified, 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? Does the proposal demonstrate that resources will be available to complete the project? Do the proposed studies benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, or subject populations, or employ useful collaborative arrangements?

D. Literature Cited

No page limit - List all literature citations for your Research Plan. Citation references should be limited to relevant and current literature; be concise and select only those references cited in the Research Plan.

Standard abbreviations are acceptable with two exceptions: full titles and full paging must be provided. Upload your completed document to the electronic system.

Each reference must list the:

- Authors in the same order as they appear on the paper (list all or up to 15)
- Title
- Name of the book or journal
- Volume number
- Page numbers
- Year of publication

E. Research Project Environment

Two-page limit, unless noted below

The AHA has a template form (next page) that outlines the information should be included in this document. You are permitted to use information from a current Resources Form prepared for an NIH application. You may type text into the AHA form or copy and paste the information from the NIH Resources Form into the Research Project Environment Form.

Collaborative Sciences Award – All co-PIs are to upload a Research Project Environment to the application (two-page limit each).

Merit Award - **One** additional page may be used if a more extensive description is required, for a maximum of three pages.

All Fellowship Programs - Sponsor's Research Environment has no page limit.

Career Development Award – Primary Mentor's Research Environment - no page limit.

AHA RESEARCH PROJECT ENVIRONMENT

Applicant's Name _____

This page is similar in information to the SF424 (R&R) Facilities & Other Resources used by the NIH. This form allows you to use information from a current Facilities & Other Resources document already prepared for an NIH application. You may copy and paste the information from the NIH document into this form. Add one additional page, if needed. Upon completion, convert this form to Portable Document Format (pdf).

FACILITIES:

(Specify the facilities to be used for the conduct of the proposed research. Indicate the performance sites and describe capacities, pertinent capabilities, relative proximity, and extent of availability to the project.)

LABORATORY:

CLINICAL:

ANIMAL:

COMPUTER:

OFFICE:

OTHER:

(Identify support services and specify the extent to which they will be available to the project.)

MAJOR EQUIPMENT:

(List the most important items already available to this project, noting the location and pertinent capabilities of each.)

F. Budget Justification

Two-page limit

The Budget Justification form requests minimal narrative explanation of expenses proposed for the project. The AHA has a template form that outlines the information should be included in this document. You may access the template by clicking on the Question Mark in this section or by clicking this link: [Budget Justification Template](#)

If the application is funded, a detailed budget (for grant applications) will be required at award activation for review in accordance with Association guidelines by staff and/or the Research Committee.

If the applicant's institution requires detailed budget information, the applicant should submit details to his/her institutional Grants Office at application submission.

For Career Development Award ONLY:

The budget justification is optional. There is not a separate section in the application form to upload a budget justification. If you wish to include it, please attach it to the end of your Literature Cited. Literature Cited has no page limitation, and can easily accommodate the addition of your two-page Budget Justification.

G. Publications or Abstracts

There is no page limit on publications (also known as reprints).

Upload three of the most pertinent publications that list you as an author. If none are considered pertinent to the project, submit three other publications that best represent your work.

Applicants are permitted to cite interim research products, such as preprints, as part of their applications. Interim Research Products are complete, public research products that are not final. A common form is the preprint, which is a complete and public draft of a scientific document. Preprints are typically unreviewed manuscripts written in the style of a peer-reviewed journal article. Scientists issue preprints to speed dissemination, establish priority, obtain feedback, and offset publication bias. Another common type of interim product is a preregistered protocol, where a scientist publicly declares key elements of their research protocol in advance. Preregistration can help scientists enhance the rigor of their work.

Abstracts are acceptable for junior AHA applicants.

The file name for each publication should contain fewer than 30 characters. Longer file names could result in the publication not appearing after saving it into this section. If this happens, rename the publication and upload it again.

If you have fewer than three publications you will be unable to save changes to the Publication section. Each of the three areas must have an upload. If you do not have three publications, then create a PDF document that says, "Not Available" for each publication fewer than three. Upload the document to as many fields as necessary to satisfy the system requirements. Save each one.

For the Collaborative Sciences Award program, each co-principal investigator may upload three publications to support the proposal.

12. Uploading Supporting Documents from Third Parties

Third parties (except referents) will send their documents to you electronically (via e-mail). The applicant is to upload the documents into the application. Convert all supporting documents to Portable Document Format (PDF) prior to uploading to Grants@Heart. Also, check that the converted documents are legible.

Supporting documents from third party personnel (except referents) are **to be uploaded in the Third Party Personnel section**. Click the Upload button in each section to upload the supporting documentation for each third party. Click Save after each upload.

If the supporting documentation has not been uploaded, a message will appear in the Supporting Documents section. Uploaded third party documents are visible in this section as hyperlinks for all parties except Referents. Uploaded referent documents will show only a document name. The applicant may use the link provided to send email reminders to referents who have not uploaded their supporting documentation.

You will be able to submit your application if reference documents are missing. Reference letters are the only documents that can be missing when you submit your application to the Grants Officer. If your application is a resubmission, the reference letters will not copy over from the previous submission. When you enter the name of your referent in the application, that person will receive an auto-generated email giving instructions for submitting the reference letter.

13. Research Subjects/Assurances

The applicant must answer the questions regarding experimentation in their proposed research project. Visit our website for more information about [AHA policies](#).

a. Adult Human Stem Cells

The American Heart Association funds human adult stem cell research. This research is governed by the standards described in "Ethical Aspects of Research with Human Subjects and Animals." These standards shall be applied by the AHA in funding any research involving human adult stem cells. Applications involving human adult stem cells fall under the just-in-time Institutional Review Board (IRB)/Privacy Board assurance policy described above under human subjects.

b. Cloning

The AHA funds cloning research including human DNA sequences, cell lines and animals subject to ethical principles and restrictions to prevent abuse.

- *Acceptable research*

Acceptable research involves cloning to generate animal models (such as transgenic animals) which express human disease for research use:

- to develop specific treatments for persons suffering from diseases, and
- to produce tissue or organs for transplantation to replace or augment damaged or diseased tissues or organs in humans.

- Areas ineligible for AHA funding

Cloning of humans as asexual reproduction or cloning of humans intended as sources of tissue or organs to harvest are not acceptable. However, the Association will fund research using human cell lines and DNA sequences for purposes of producing tissue or organs for transplantation to replace or augment damaged or diseased tissues or organs in humans.

c. Human Subjects

If the proposed research project involves human subjects, the population sampled shall be inclusive of the general population, of relevance to the scientific question posed, without restriction in regard to gender, race, age, and socioeconomic status. Proposals that intentionally restrict the population sampled must include a compelling scientific rationale for such research design.

Each applicant is strongly encouraged to submit his/her project to the appropriate human subjects Institutional Review Board/Privacy Board at the time of application. Funded applicants will have a maximum time of three months following the original activation date to submit the IRB human subjects approval and approved patient consent form for their projects to the AHA. (For example, if the activation date is January 1, IRB approval and approved patient consent form must be received prior to March 31; if the activation date is July 1, IRB approval and approved patient consent form must be received prior to September 30.) If the IRB approval and approved patient consent form are not provided to the AHA within three months of the originally-posted activation date, the award must be relinquished; there are no exceptions.

Any significant change in the scientific research plan or scope/aims of the project after submission to AHA must be reported to the AHA when submitting the just-in-time IRB/Privacy Board approval.

d. Human Embryonic Stem Cells or Fetal Stem Cells

If your answer is "Yes", you are not eligible to apply. Research applications involving the creation of human embryos or the derivation or use of human stem cells from in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment embryos or fetal sources will not be accepted.

e. Human Fetal Tissue

The AHA does not fund scientific research that involves the use of human fetal tissue.

14. Animal Subjects

If you answer “Yes” to the Animal Subjects section then AAALAC or PHS information must be provided. If your proposal involves animals and your institution does not have unqualified accreditation from the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International (AAALAC) or does not hold a current Public Health Service (PHS) Animal Welfare Assurance, you are **not eligible to apply**.

If you answer “Yes” to Vertebrate Animals, you must create a document titled, **VERTEBRATE ANIMAL SUBJECTS**. See Formatting and Page Requirements in section 6 of these instructions for page set-up guidelines.

Address the following five points. When research involving vertebrate animals will take place at collaborating site(s) or other performance site(s), provide this information before discussing the five points.

1. Provide a description of the proposed use of the animals in the work outlined in the Research Design and Methods section. Identify the species, strains, ages, sex, and numbers of animals to be used in the proposed work.
2. Justify the use of animals, the choice of species, and the numbers to be used. If animals are in short supply, costly, or to be used in large numbers, provide an additional rationale for their selection and numbers.
3. Provide information on the veterinary care of the animals involved.
4. Describe the procedures for ensuring that discomfort, distress, pain, and injury will be limited to that which is unavoidable in the conduct of scientifically sound research. Describe the use of analgesic, anesthetic, and tranquilizing drugs and/or comfortable restraining devices, where appropriate, to minimize discomfort, distress, pain, and injury.
5. Describe any method of euthanasia to be used and the reasons for its selection. State whether this method is consistent with the recommendations of the Panel on Euthanasia of the American Veterinary Medical Association. If not, present a justification for not following the recommendations.

Convert your Word document to Portable Document Format (pdf) and upload to Grants@Heart. The system will only accept a .pdf file. A-TRAC Pilot Program applicants do not need to upload the file in Grants@Heart.

The AHA has adopted just-in-time IACUC assurances for animal subjects. Each applicant is strongly encouraged to submit his/her project to the appropriate animal care and use committee at the time of application; it is not a requirement that IACUC approval be deferred. Funded applicants will have a maximum time of three months following the original activation date to submit the IACUC approval for their projects to the AHA. (For example, if the activation date is July 1, IACUC approval must be received prior to September 30.) If the IACUC approval is not provided to the AHA within three months of the originally-posted activation date, the award must be relinquished. There are no exceptions.

Any significant change in the scientific research plan or scope/aims of the project subsequent to AHA submission must be reported to the AHA when submitting the just-in-time IACUC approval.

Application Fee/Membership

Each applicant must be either an American Heart Association Professional Member (memberships start under \$100) or pay \$250 per application submission. Professional Membership includes free research application submissions. This fee helps to defray the administrative cost of processing applications, making more funds available for research awards. *This requirement was developed by the AHA Research Committee, with input from affiliate Research Committees, AHA's professional councils' leadership committees, and the Council Operations Committee. It was considered and approved by the Science Advisory Coordinating Committee (SACC) and the Board of Directors.*

Until an applicant joins or renews AHA Professional Membership or pays the fee, she/he will not be able to submit the application to the Grants Officer.

If you are already an AHA Professional member at any level, enter your membership number. The last name on your application must match the last name associated with the membership number. If you do not know your membership number, click the "question mark" in this section for more detailed instructions.

Applicants may renew or join via a link in the [Grants @Heart](#) application site. You may also join or renew by phone at 301-223-2307 or 800-787-8984. There is a 3-5 day waiting period to process membership by phone. AHA awardees are permitted to use award funds renew annual AHA Professional Membership.

Applicants who opt to pay the \$250 application fee, instead of joining, will be required to enter credit card information prior to submitting their application to the Grants Officer.

Membership dues and application fees are not refundable. Questions about the membership/application fee requirement may be directed to apply@heart.org or call 214-360-6107 option 1.

Visit the [AHA/ASA Professional Membership](#) page to find out more about membership levels and benefits.

Application Fee Frequently Asked Questions

- *As a fellowship applicant, may I use my sponsor's membership number?*

Predoctoral and postdoctoral fellowship applicants must have their own memberships. They are not covered under their sponsor's memberships. AHA wants to more actively engage these training-level investigators to become involved with AHA professional councils and to explore the many opportunities available through the association. Applicants to the Undergraduate Student Research Medical/Graduate Student Fellowship are exempt from the Membership/Application Fee requirement, due to the short duration and limited dollars for these awards.

- *How do I find my membership number and learn if my membership is still active?*

There are several ways to validate your membership:

1. Log into the Membership site by clicking the 'SIGN IN' button at the top right of the screen. Enter your username and password. Once logged in, your name and membership ID will appear on the screen.
2. Your membership number can be found on the journal mailing label above your name, a membership renewal notice, in your original welcome packet and on your membership card.
3. If you have a few days prior to the research application deadline, you can send a request via e-mail to ahacustomerservice@lww.com.

Please include your full name and address for confirmation. Response from this web site may take up to three days.

4. Call AHA Customer Service during regular business hours 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Central Time) at 301-223-2307 or 800-787-8984.
 5. From your Grants@Heart research application, go to the Membership/ Application Fee section. Click "yes" to the question, "Are you an AHA Professional Member?" You will see a link for those who forgot their membership number. You must enter the email address that is associated with your AHA Professional Membership account, and your member number will be emailed to you.
 6. Contact the AHA's applicant assistance team at apply@heart.org.
 7. In the meantime, you may complete the entire application, but you will not be able to submit it to your Grants Officer until you enter your membership information, join via the link in Grants@Heart, or pay the \$250 application fee.
- *My name has changed. Grants@Heart does not recognize my member number, because my new last name has been pre-populated. What should I do?*

Please update your membership profile by following these steps:

1. Visit [Professional Heart Daily](#) and choose 'sign-in' at the top of the screen. Enter your username and password.
 2. Once logged in, select your name in the header. The membership badge will display.
 3. Scroll down and select 'Profile Update' link. The Profile Update page allows you to update your account information (i.e. name, email, password, etc.). The change is made to the database immediately.
 4. If you still cannot proceed, through your application, you may need to log off and back onto Grants@Heart.
- *I would like to become an AHA Professional Member, so that I may apply for free, but I am too close to the submission deadline to wait 3 days to receive membership confirmation after registering.*

Use the link contained in the Grants@Heart application to be instantly recognized as a member. Follow these steps:

1. Log onto Grants@Heart and open/begin your application.
 2. Go to the Membership/Application Fee screen and click the link to join from within the application. By using this link, you will be taken to the membership site.
 3. Complete the joining process.
 4. Click the "Return to Grants@Heart" button at the bottom right to be routed back to your application in Grants@Heart. Grants@Heart will recognize that you have gone through the process. You will be able to submit your application to your grants officer.
- *If my grants officer declines my application to allow me to make revisions, will my membership or payment information be saved?*

If your grants officer declines your application, all your membership or payment information will be saved. If your membership has expired between the time you began your application and the time you submitted it to your grants officer, your membership information will not be saved.

- *If my grants officer misses the deadline, will I still be charged a fee?*

When you enter your information to pay the application fee and click "Submit Payment, your credit card is charged immediately.

If the applicant decided not to submit and instructed his/her GO not to send it to AHA, then neither the application fee nor the membership dues will be refunded. It is advisable not to pay the fee until all other sections of your application are complete and you are sure you want to submit the application for

consideration.

If a grants officer will not allow the application to be submitted to AHA, then a refund of the \$250 application fee will be issued. Membership dues will not be refunded. Please send the applicant's name, phone number, email address, and the application ID number for which the applicant wants a refund to apply@heart.org.

- *How can I be sure that my fee was accepted and my credit card was charged?*

For those who pay the fee, the transaction number will appear on the Membership/Application Fee page of your application. In addition, the AHA's credit card processing company will send email confirmation that your payment has been made. The application fee is immediately charged to your credit card when you click the "Submit Payment" button.

- *I just joined (or renewed) my professional membership using the link from the Membership/Application Fee page in my Grants @Heart application. I had to log back onto Grants@Heart, and it appears that my membership sign-up did not work .*
 1. If the applicant closed the membership page, instead of clicking the "Return to Grants@Heart" button, go to the Membership/Application Fee page of your research application. Under 'Are you an AHA Professional Member?', click Yes.
 2. Select 'Forgot your member number'.
 3. Use the option to search by membership username, and click 'verify membership'.
 4. "Processing (Your membership has been validated. Please continue.)" should now appear in the membership number field.
 5. This confirms that the membership process was completed, and you may submit the proposal to your grants officer.
- *When I enter my membership number, I receive an error message that states "we could not verify membership with given details."*

There may be several reasons for this error message:

1. If you copied and pasted your membership ID, please check that there is not an extra space at the end of the membership number or user ID you entered.
2. Verify that your membership has not expired by logging onto your Professional Membership account at [Professional Heart Daily](#) to check the status of your membership. It must be in "Active" status.
3. Confirm that your last name is the same in your Grants@Heart application as it is on your Professional Membership account.

****If you are unable to resolve the error message, please call our staff at 214-630-6107 option 1. Do not pay the applicant fee if you are an AHA Professional Member.****

- *Will my grants officer be able to see my credit card or membership information?*

No, if you pay the application fee, the data fields will become blank after your payment has been received by AHA. You must log into your AHA Professional Membership account to see personal information.

15. Submit to Grants Officer

Upon completion of all the application sections, the applicant/investigator should check all sections and uploads for accuracy. If the incorrect document has been uploaded, simply repeat the upload process and select the correct document. Be sure to save all changes.

When you have confirmed that your application is ready for submission, select “Submit to Grants Officer” in the left menu. If there are missing sections in the application, they will be highlighted with Yellow check marks in the left navigation. You must correct the section with the Yellow check marks before you can submit. You will see confirmation on your screen that your application has been submitted to your Grants Officer.

PLEASE NOTE: The Grants Officer is responsible for submitting the application to the AHA. It is very important that the correct grants officer is selected from the dropdown list in Grants@Heart. It is also important to work with the grants officer to establish the AHA submission deadline and to find out if the institution has set an internal deadline.

Applications submitted late, even if it is just a few minutes late, will not be accepted. The system shuts down automatically at the designated time. Start early and submit early!

Routing the Application Within the Institution

Some institutions require that applicants route their applications to several people for review and/or approval. Grants@Heart does not include a mechanism for “sharing” your application, so there is not a way to route your application electronically.

How to Print an Application

The AHA requires only an online submission through Grants@Heart. A printed copy will NOT be accepted as a form of application submission. The investigator can print the application by clicking Download Application on left navigation bar – the proposed research plan with print; only some of the other sections will print. A printed copy should not be used to check page format requirements

Signatures

Signatures are not required for AHA online applications. When you submit your application, it is routed to your institutional Grants Officer for review, approval and submission to the AHA. All documents needed for submission are required online. DO NOT send a paper copy of your application. Application submission must be done online through Grants@Heart.

Application Submission to AHA

The Grants Officer is responsible for submitting the application to AHA. Approving the application completes the submission process. Declining the application sends the application back to the applicant/investigator.

If revisions are needed prior to the deadline, the grants officer may reject the application to enable the investigator to make the changes and resubmit it to the grants officer. Once the application is submitted to AHA, no changes can be made.

Visit detailed information about [grants officer access](#).

After the application deadline, no supplementary material (additional preliminary data, new publications, etc.) will be accepted unless requested by AHA staff. However, if a publication listed as pending is accepted after the application is submitted, you may notify AHA via apply@heart.org and attach the acceptance letter (but not the publication). You must first obtain consent from your grants officer before contacting AHA.

Submitted applications will be reviewed based upon the peer review and eligibility criteria for the research application program the applicant selected. The program cannot be changed once an application is submitted.

Withdrawing an Application

Applications may be withdrawn at the request of the applicant. The request must be submitted to the AHA in writing. You may send your request to apply@heart.org. You will receive an email confirmation when your application is withdrawn.

Applications may also be administratively withdrawn by AHA if the applicant:

- is determined to be ineligible for the program to which they have applied;
- submits the same or similar application for the fourth time;
- does not comply with format requirements (type size/characters per inch, lines per page, and page limitations);
- is determined to have submitted an application that is duplicated by another applicant.

Peer Review

When an application is submitted to the American Heart Association, it is assigned to a peer review committee based on the science type of the proposal and the **first major science classification choice**. Two scientists from the peer review committee provide an independent, in-depth review. A third reviewer is also assigned as a reader of the proposal, to assist with differences of opinions and to balance out the discussion. The reader is not required to post a critique, but sometimes comments on the overall impression of the proposal. These scientists are assigned an application based upon their broad knowledge of the science and methods contained in the application. Each peer reviewer is assigned a limited number of applications to review in detail. All peer reviewers may access all applications in their committee, if not in conflict, and may review on their own initiative applications not specifically assigned to them.

The Summary for Non-scientists will be reviewed for mission impact during the peer review process. Therefore, it is important that applicants clearly indicate the potential impact of their proposed work on the AHA mission. **The potential impact of the proposed project on the AHA mission, as determined by review of the lay summary, will be factored into the overall meritscore for each application.**

One element of the AHA's new strategic research direction is to add lay stakeholders to the peer review process for some research programs. A lay reviewer may be assigned to assess your application's potential impact on the AHA mission. Lay reviewers are individuals without formal training as a scientist who have a strong interest in advancing the prevention and/or management of heart diseases and stroke and assist in the review of American Heart Association research applications. For this reason, applicants must state clearly and in language that can be understood by a non-scientist the potential impact of their proposal on the AHA mission.

The committee meets and discusses the scientific merit of each proposal and then each committee member privately assigns a score from 1.0 to 5.0 to each. A score of 1.0 is best. After an application is scored, the reviewer's individual scores are averaged to give the application an overall priority score. When all applications in a program have been scored, they are percentile ranked. The calculations are done across all applications received for a specific program.

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 and will result in the removal of your application from funding consideration and institutional notification of ethical concerns. Reviewers are directed to notify the AHA if an applicant contacts them.

Funding Notification

Each program description includes a timeline of the application deadline, anticipated funding notification date, and award start date. Applicants and Grant Officers receive an email from Grants@Heart when funding status is ready to be viewed.

When peer review is complete, the AHA Research Committee will meet to make funding decisions. An email notice will be sent from Grants@Heart to applicants, sponsors (where applicable) and grants officers advising them to log in to view the application's funding status. Check your email address in Grants@Heart to confirm it is correct. Even if you do not receive an email from the system, you can log in and check the status of your application.

If you do not see the outcomes screen immediately upon accessing Grants@Heart, go to Application Administration > View All Applications > Outcomes (next to the application in question). The outcomes of prior applications are always available.

Next Deadlines

The American Heart Association has rolling deadlines throughout the year. If your application is unsuccessful, you are encouraged to reapply the next time the program is offered and if you continue to meet the application requirements. New deadline dates are generally posted with several months' notice. Current information will be posted to the [AHA Application Information page](#).