Applicant
Information Guide

MISSION STATEMENT

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.

APPLICANT INFORMATION GUIDE

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 submission of your application.

The AHA has implemented 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 from any location with internet capabilities.

[View AHA Policies Governing All Research Applications and Awards](#).
- Patent, Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer Policy
- Standards on Falsification of Scientific Data, Plagiarism and Scientific Misconduct
- 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

Our research staff at the National Center office is available Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Central Time. If you need assistance with the application process or have questions, please contact us by emailing apply@heart.org or by calling us at 214-360-6107 option 1. We will reply as quickly as possible.

Help documents to assist [applicants/principal investigators](#) and [grant officers](#) with the application process have been posted on our website.

Hyperlinks to other reference materials posted on our website have also been included throughout this document.

Grants@Heart login page

AHA Research Homepage

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I. GETTING STARTED

A. PROGRAMS AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Program descriptions of funding opportunities are generally posted on the AHA website in March prior to the July deadlines or September prior to the following January deadlines. It is a good idea to begin the application process early. It is the responsibility of the applicant to prepare the application and work with all parties associated with the application to ensure timely submission by the application deadline date.

Research program funding opportunities are offered through the AHA National Center and our seven affiliates. The National Center programs are available to eligible investigators and institutions across the United States. The affiliate programs are limited to eligible investigators and institutions in the affiliate's geographical area. View the Affiliate List by States on our webpage to find your affiliate.

Different programs may be offered each cycle. To find out which programs are being offered, visit our Programs by Funding Component page. It is important to review the posted program descriptions each cycle in the event there are changes. The program descriptions contain important information that will help you determine which program is right for you. The descriptions can be found on the Funding Opportunities page.

View an overview of the AHA research programs and the career stage targeted for each program.

Please review the application deadlines on our webpage.

B. APPLICATION FEE

Each applicant is required to either be an American Heart Association Professional Member at any level or to pay $100 per application submission. This fee helps to defray the administrative cost of processing applications, therefore making more funds available for research awards.

Please note: Until an applicant joins/renews AHA Professional Membership or pays the fee, she/he will not be able to submit the application to the Grants Officer. Questions about the new membership/application fee requirement may be directed to apply@heart.org.

Applicants may renew or join membership via a link in the Grants@Heart application site. Applicants who opt to pay the $100 application fee, instead of joining, will be required to enter credit card information prior to submitting their application to the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer then approves and submits that application to AHA on behalf of the applicant and institution.

The 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.

C. SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Applications are submitted to the AHA via Grants@Heart, a Web-based application. It is accessible 24 hours a day 7 days a week except for scheduled maintenance. It is accessible from any location with internet capabilities.

PLEASE NOTE: Grants@Heart will time out after 30 minutes of inactivity.

D. ACCESSING GRANTS@HEART

An individual must be registered as a Principal Investigator with Grants@Heart to apply for research funding from the Association.

1. **First-time Applicants**
   First-time applicants must create a user ID and password by completing the user registration. On the Grants@Heart login page, click the link "First time applicant, please register here". Data fields marked with a red asterisk are required and must be completed. After you complete the registration, you will have access to the system.

2. **Returning Users/Applicants**
   Returning users should use their existing user ID and password. If you have a role other than Principal Investigator, do not reregister. This will create another user account. You can add the Principal Investigator role to your existing user account. You only need one user account with Grants@Heart. If you have questions about how to add a role to your existing user account, please contact our office at 214-360-6107.

The user ID and password are case sensitive. You should use the same user login each time you access Grants@Heart. If you do not remember your login information, please click the "Did you forget your ID or Password?" link on the login page. After the fifth failed attempt, your account may be locked for up to two hours.

If you encounter login issues or need instructions on how to register, please contact our office or check out the help documents online.

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

II. PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION

Many sections of the application may be prepared prior to beginning the submission process in Grants@Heart. Adherence to specified page limit and format requirements is necessary. No applicant should have an advantage over other applicants by providing more content in his/her application by using smaller, denser type.

Internet website 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, the reviewers are cautioned that they should not directly access an internet site as it could compromise their anonymity.

The AHA has the responsibility to make the 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 our website. Before submitting the application to the AHA, please double check each section of the application and the documents uploaded. You will not be able to modify or change the application or its content once it is submitted to AHA. Only the documents

required for application submission will be accepted. Additional or supplemental documents will not be accepted.

A. CREATING AN APPLICATION

To start a new application, select Application Administration and then Create New Application from the left navigation. 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.

1. Selecting the Funding Component/Programs
The National Center and affiliates are referred to as Funding Components in Grants@Heart. Once you find the funding component and program you want to apply to, you can begin the application process. Refer to section I.A. for more information about funding components and program offerings.

2. The Program Questionnaire
The next step in the application process is to create a new application and complete the program questionnaire. The questionnaire is a series of questions to help determine whether you are applying to the correct program based on your professional and academic career stage. If you have not done so already, please 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 any question, you will receive a message that you provided an unacceptable response(s) to the questionnaire. You will be given an opportunity to explain the response(s).

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.

3. Copy Application
You can copy certain items from a previous application 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 particular 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.

4. **Dual submission**
   A dual submission is the same or similar application submitted to two funding opportunities in the same cycle. If eligible and the programs are available, you may simultaneously submit an application to an affiliate and to the National Center. The proposed research plan may need to be adjusted based upon the duration of the award and the dollars available.

   NOTE: If you have a pending application, when you successfully complete the questionnaire, you will be asked if you want to mark this application as a dual submission. If you answer "Yes", you will be given an opportunity to copy a previous application.

5. **Resubmission**
   A resubmission is 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). The number of submissions of the same or similar application is determined by application deadline cycles. If an applicant submits the same science project in one cycle to two AHA funding sources (for example, one to an affiliate and one to the National program for the January deadline cycle), and this will be counted as one submission. 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.

   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 radio button for the application you want to resubmit and click Copy. Please pay close attention and respond correctly as your response will determine whether you have a section in your application to upload a resubmission document and/or whether application sections are pre-populated with existing application information. If you answer "No", the appropriate sections may not appear in your application.

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

   In order for an applicant to have the benefit of critiques from the previous cycle, 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 also be provided with the critiques and scores from the previous round for reference.

   For more information about resubmission, please visit our website.

B. **THE APPLICATION SECTIONS**

The sections of the application and the required document uploads may vary by program. The sections of the application are listed in the left navigation on your screen. You may follow the standard flow of the application by clicking the Continue button at the bottom of each page. You may also select the section you want to work on by clicking on it in the left navigation.

There are question marks throughout the application sections to explain what information is required in each section. You must save each section on a page.

1. **Advanced Profile**
    In this section of the application, 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 information in the application, click on "Profile Manager" at the top of the screen at any time prior to application submission.

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 and formatting (such as super or subscripts, special characters, 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.) 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. To see our definition of a resubmission, please visit our website.

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

3. **Science Classification**
    Complete this section based upon your proposed research project. Choose BOTH a Major Classification 1 and 2. Also sub-classifications are NEEDED to match your application to the appropriate scientific expert. View the current science classification list.

4. **Research Classification**
    The American Heart Association is frequently asked to categorize the research it is funding by a number of different categories. These requests can originate with our donors, the general public or our many volunteers. Please complete each of the following 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 publically available within 12 months of the end of the funding period (and any no-cost extension). Specified early-career awards will be exempt from this policy. The programs that are currently exempt include Undergraduate fellowships, Medical Student Research fellowships, Predoctoral Fellowships, Postdoctoral Fellowships, Mentor/AHA Mentee Awards and Mentored Clinical and Population Research Awards. For other programs, if a data sharing plan is not included as part of the application process, the applicant should provide a rationale for why it is unnecessary or inappropriate. "Opt-out" requests will be evaluated according to established guidelines.

6. **Institutional Personnel**
    Institutional personnel are persons associated with the Applicant's (Principal Investigator's) institution, such as a Grants Officer, Fiscal Officer and Immediate Supervisor. These personnel will not need to provide any supporting documentation for the application.

    Grants Officers and Fiscal Officers must be selected from the list of registered users. Contact your grants office to make sure you are selecting the correct person from the list. It is important to select the correct Grants Officer as they are responsible for the 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, please confirm that they are registered users with Grants@Heart.

7. **Third Party Personnel**
The applicant must identify the persons associated with his/her application and their role on the project.

Required Third Party Personnel: Some third party roles are required by a program. These sections will appear automatically in your 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 for programs and may be added if needed (such as a collaborating investigator or consultant). The role must be added in the Third Party Personnel section in order to upload supporting documentation for the application. If a role is not included in the dropdown 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 will be responsible for uploading all supporting documents except referent letters, which are considered confidential.

NOTE: With the exception of Referents, the application cannot be submitted without the supporting documentation; therefore, it is important to notify third parties of your deadline for submitting the application.

Referents have an extended deadline after the application submission deadline. View more information about the referent deadline.

Instructions for completing all third party supporting documentation are available on our website. Find your program and click the Third Party tab.

Possible Third Party Roles:
- Collaborating Investigator
  A collaborating investigator is an individual who contributes in a substantive way to the scientific development or execution of the project.

  Typically, these individuals have doctoral or other professional degrees and would devote a specific percent of effort to the project. The collaborating investigator will need to provide supporting documentation for the research application. View more details for collaborating investigators.

- Consultant
  A Consultant is an individual who 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 which are performed in a limited window of time or occasionally contribute a specific method/technique/analysis or materials for the project. In the case of fellowship awards, the services of a consultant are not routine and should only be listed where the consultant is absolutely essential to the proposed research training experience. View additional details for consultants.

- Department Head
  The Department Head provides information about the applicant's academic appointment, career stage, support from the institution, etc. Visit our website to download the template for the Department Head Letter.

- Sponsor for the Mentored Clinical & Population Research Award Program
  The role of the sponsor 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. The sponsor must provide supporting documentation required by the American Heart Association for the research application. The sponsor also works with the applicant to address the peer review criteria for the clinical program. View more details for the sponsor.

- Sponsor
  A sponsor is a senior investigator under whom the research project of a predoctoral or postdoctoral fellowship will be performed. A sponsor is the administrative link with the institution. The sponsor offers whatever supervisory or collaborative assistance is necessary for the progress of the research program. A sponsor must be familiar with an applicant's area of research. View more details for the sponsor.

- Co-Sponsor – A joint sponsor of a predoctoral or postdoctoral fellowship applicant is someone with 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 party. The applicant must add co-sponsor section to the Third Party section of the application. The co-sponsor should provide the same documentation as the sponsor role.

- 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.

Note: The role of Co-Principal Investigators is only recognized on the Collaborative Science Award program. 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. **Lay Summary**
   Describe your work in layman terms. This information may be reviewed by people who do not have scientific or medical backgrounds. Please be as clear as and avoid technical and scientific terms when possible. When formulating your response, 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.

   NOTE: 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.

9. **Co-Authors**
   List all co-authors (**at assistant professor level or above**) with whom you have published an article or abstract within the past 3 years. If you cannot determine co-authors' academic positions, then include them in the listing of co-authors within the past 3 years. Continue to click the "Add

Another" button until your list is complete. If you have no publications, "None" may be entered in all fields and saved successfully.

10. **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.

    - Fellowship Applications
      The budgets on fellowship applications are fixed. The applicant is unable to modify or change it. Please review the program descriptions to determine the budget available for the program. If the fellowship for your affiliate has a sliding scale, the stipend amount will be determined by your years of postdoctoral experience.

    - Grant Applications
      The budgets for the applications 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.

11. **Funds Available**
    Available funding information is required for all applications and is used to check for alternative or overlap issues between the proposed research and other current or pending projects.

    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.

    - **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 duplicate budgetary requests.

    - **Overlapping (active or approved applications)**
      An award must be identified as overlapping if it supports the same or closely related projects and/or in which there are duplicated budgetary requests. The applicant can accept the Association award only if he/she relinquishes the overlapping application.

    After the grant application is reviewed by the Association, the alternative designation of the project or the budget cannot be changed in order to accommodate any partial alternative funding. The applicant is not allowed to adjust the scientific aims or budget of an AHA application to accommodate any 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 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.

12. **Science/Evaluation Information**

    The document uploads for the Science/Evaluation Information section of the application varies by program. The sections required for the application will automatically be included. A list of the required documents with instructions, format and page requirements for all programs can be found

on our website. 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:

- **Applicant/Principal Investigator Biographical Sketch/Bibliography**
  The information required in the biographical sketch is similar in format to the PHS SF424 (R&R) Biographical Sketch used by the NIH. If you have a copy of a current biographical sketch that you submitted with an NIH application, you may use it for your AHA application.

  If you are using an NIH Biographical Sketch, please note the section for Variances from Ordinary Career Progression. If any of these circumstances apply to you, be sure to add this information to the biographical sketch provided to the AHA (within the stated pages limit).

  If you don't have an NIH Biographical Sketch, create your biographical sketch using the instructions outlined on our website.

  In the biographical sketch, don't confuse "Research Support" with "Funds Available". Though they sound similar, these parts of the application are very different. As part of the biographical sketch section of the application, "Research Support" highlights your accomplishments. This information is used by the reviewers in the assessment of each individual's qualifications. In contrast, Funds Available information is required for all grant applications and is used to check for alternative or overlap issues with the current proposed research.

- **Research Plan/Proposal** (length varies by funding component and program - PDF only)
  The length of the Research Plan varies by funding component and program. It will only be accepted in pdf (portable document format). The guidelines and type requirements are available on our website. A document that exceeds the page limit will be rejected by Grants@Heart.

  Before beginning the Research Plan, review the program description noting especially the qualifications and any restrictions for the program for which you are applying. The Research Plan should address all of the peer review criteria. The peer review criteria can be found within the program description.

  Please note: Submission of an application to the AHA with identical or significantly similar content as another investigator is prohibited. Also, the submission of applications to the AHA with identical or significantly similar content from a sponsor to a grant program and their fellow to fellowship program is prohibited. Both applications will receive a recommendation for "disapproval". If a grant application is submitted by the sponsor of a fellowship application, both applications may be funded if there is no duplication of aims.

  Resubmissions: If this application is a "resubmission" of a previous proposal, mark changes by using brackets, italics or bold (do not shade or underline changes) within the Research Plan. If the application is a resubmission, the applicant should upload a separate two-page "resubmission modifications" document. Visit our website for information on preparing the resubmission documentation.

- **Literature Cited**
  List all literature citations for your Research Plan. There is no page limit for literature references cited. 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

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- Name of the book or journal
- Volume number
- Page numbers
- Year of publication

- **Research Project Environment**
  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 of the application. Also, you are allowed to use information from a current Resources form prepared for an NIH application. You may type text into the form or you can copy and paste the information from the NIH Resources form into the Research Project Environment form. If you need a more extensive description, you may add <u>one</u> additional page behind this form.

- **Budget Justification**
  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 of the application. 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.

- **Academic Record**
  You must create a document to outline your academic achievements and explain the grading system used.

- **Individual Development Plan/Training/Career Goals**
  You must create a document to outline your career plans and goals.

- **Publications (reprints) or Abstracts**
  There is no page limit on publications (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. Reprints and articles recently submitted may be used.

  Abstracts are acceptable for junior applicants. Undergraduate students or predoctoral fellows may not have publications or abstracts. If there are none, the applicant must create a document stating "NONE" and upload it.

- **Resubmission (This section appears if the application was marked as a resubmission.)**
  If the application has been marked as a Resubmission, Resubmission will be the last section of the Science/Evaluation Information section. You will be allowed to upload a separate two-page "resubmission modifications" document. For information on preparing the resubmission documentation, refer to section I.E.5.

13. **Supporting Documentation**
    Applicants can upload supporting documentation by using the "Upload" button in the section of the application where Third Party Personnel are entered and saved. If the supporting documentation has not been uploaded, you will see a message to that effect in the Supporting Documentation section. Uploaded documentation from third parties is visible in this section of the application. They will appear as hyperlinks for all parties except the Referent. The uploaded referent documents will only show a document name if the document has been uploaded. A link has been provided for the applicant to send email reminders to referents that have not uploaded their supporting documentation.

Instructions for completing all third party supporting documentation are available on our website. Find your program and click the Third Party tab.

14. Research Subjects/Assurances

The applicant must answer the questions regarding experimentation in their proposed research project. For AHA policies, please visit our website.

- **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.

- **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.

- **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 subsequent to AHA submission must be reported to the AHA when submitting the just-in-time IRB/Privacy Board approval.

- **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.

- **Human Fetal Tissue**
  The AHA does not fund scientific research that involves the use of human fetal tissue.

15. **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, an additional document must be created and uploaded before application submission. It is a good idea to create your document first and then return to complete the Animal Subjects tab. For instructions on what is required for vertebrate animal subjects, visit our website.

    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.

16. **Membership/Application Fee**
    Applicants are required to be either an American Heart Association Professional Member at any level or to pay $100 per application submission. Join or renew early to avoid delays in membership validation. Membership registration can take up to five business days for your membership to be active and valid in the system.

If you are an AHA Professional member at any level, enter your membership number. Your last name on you 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 of the application for more detailed instructions.

Find out more about membership levels and benefits.

To become an AHA Professional member, click the link in Grants@Heart to be directed to the membership page. Once you begin the membership process, **do not close the membership site. After you have entered your membership payment information, click "Continue"** to be brought back to this application as a member. This process will allow your membership to be validated immediately.

If you are not an AHA Professional member and wish to pay the $100 application fee instead of joining AHA, click 'No' to indicate that you are not a member. You must enter credit card information to pay the fee and to submit your application to your grants officer.

PLEASE NOTE: membership dues and application fees are not refundable.

17. 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!

C. The 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 there are corrections or revisions needed, the investigator has the ability to make the changes and resubmit it to the grants officer if the AHA deadline has not passed. Once the application is submitted to AHA, no changes can be made.

For detailed information about the grants officers access to Grants@Heart, please visit our website.

Please review the AHA Application deadlines.

After the application deadline, no supplementary material (additional preliminary data, new publications, etc.) will be accepted unless requested by AHA staff.

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.

A. 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)

B. PEER REVIEW

When an application is submitted to the American Heart Association, it is assigned to a peer review committee based on the applicants' science classification choice and the chairperson confirmation that it is appropriate to its science. 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. These scientists are assigned a particular application based upon their knowledge of the science and methods contained in the application. Each scientist from a peer review committee is assigned a limited number of applications to review in detail. All peer review committee members can access all applications in their committee, if not in conflict, and may review on their own initiative applications not specifically assigned to them.

The lay summary 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 merit score for each application.***

One element of the AHA's new strategic research direction is to add lay reviewers to our peer review process. 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 the application is scored, the individual merit scores are averaged to get an overall value. Then all proposals from a particular peer review committee are ranked in order of merit.

Applicants should never contact reviewers regarding their applications. Discussing scientific content of an application or attempting to influence review outcome will constitute a conflict of interest in the review. Reviewers are directed to notify the AHA if an applicant contacts them.

C. APPLICATION NOTIFICATION

When peer review is complete, the AHA Research Committees will meet to make funding decisions. An email notice will be sent from Grants@Heart telling the applicants to login and check the status of the application. 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 login and check the status of your application.

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

D. NEXT DEADLINES

The American Heart Association has two deadline cycles per year. If your application is unsuccessful, you are encouraged to reapply if the program is available the next cycle and you meet the application requirements. New deadline dates are generally posted in March and September of each year.

View Frequently Asked Questions.