

Alzheimer's Association Research Fellowship (AARF) Program

Competition objectives: The Alzheimer's Association Research Fellowship Award Program is up to three years (minimum 2 years) intended to support exceptional researchers who are engaged in their post-graduate work (i.e. postdoctoral fellows) and before they have their first independent faculty positions (i.e. Assistant Professor) and working in diverse areas of research, including basic, translational, clinical, functional and social-behavioral research. **Please note, individuals applying to the program will be accepted from postdoctoral fellows with full time positions at their respective institution who have less than 10 years of research experience after receipt of their doctorate or other terminal degree. Individuals who have a position of an Assistant Professorship or above are not eligible.** Investigators doing clinically-focused research without clinical practice are encouraged to apply to the AARF program. The Alzheimer's Association feels strongly that the mentoring and involvement of researchers from diverse backgrounds and perspectives is essential to engaging cutting edge ideas and thinking in addressing scientific gaps for Alzheimer's and related dementias.

Funding and award period: Each Alzheimer's Association Research Fellowship award is limited to \$175,000. A total of **\$155,000** will be awarded for costs related to the proposed research for up to three years (minimum 2 years) for direct and indirect costs. Requests in any given year may not exceed \$60,000 (direct and indirect costs). Indirect costs are capped at 10 percent (rent for laboratory/office space is expected to be covered by indirect costs paid to the institution). The Principal Investigator must commit to a 50 percent effort toward the proposed project each funding year.

The remaining funds, \$10,000 to the applicant and \$10,000 to the primary mentor, will be awarded upon successful completion of the three year (minimum 2 years). These additional funds are to be applied to sustaining ongoing research in the Alzheimer's field and will be awarded through the applicant's and mentor's institutions. Successful completion of the program includes, but is not limited to, reaching all of the demonstrable benchmarks listed. **Please note:** A total of \$5,000 over a three year period not to exceed \$2,500 per year (*if you request the full \$2,500 for 2 years and are requesting a 3 year award you will not be able to request travel funds for one of those years*) must be allocated to support registration and travel to the annual Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC), a condition of the award.

Application: The mentor should be experienced in conducting Alzheimer's and related dementia research and in mentoring junior investigators. The application must include a 2-3 page statement from the selected mentor that includes information on his/her research qualifications and experience as a research supervisor, commitment to the applicant. This statement will be a significant part of the application review. The application must also include information to describe the mentor's research support relevant to the applicant's research plan and the nature and extent of supervision and training that he/she will provide during the period of the award. The primary mentor must agree to provide annual evaluations of the applicant's progress for the duration of the award, as required for the yearly progress report. Only one primary mentor can be

included. Additional team members who might function as mentors can be listed as key personnel.

The full grant application for the AARF, AARF-D, AACSF and AACSF-D programs consists of the following: (Templates and instructions are located under WorkPlan and Other Attachments)

1. Statement of Mentorship - 2-3 pages

Written by mentor to outline plan for the individual's training.

- the mentor should be experienced in conducting Alzheimer's and related dementia research and in mentoring junior investigators.
- the mentor should include information on his/her research qualifications and experience as a research supervisor, commitment to the applicant (this statement will be a significant part of the application review).

2. Statement of Commitment – 2 pages

Written by applicant to highlight their interest in Alzheimer's and related dementia research)

- information to describe the mentor's research support relevant to the applicant's research plan and the nature and extent of supervision and training that he/she will provide during the period of the award.
- the primary mentor must agree to provide annual evaluations of the applicant's progress for the duration of the award, as required for the yearly progress report.

3. Area of Research – 3 pages

Written by mentor and applicant; Summary of the specific area of research and project that applicant is pursuing.

- The experimental design and methods, technical procedures, instruments, characteristics of human subjects and animal populations, recruitment and retention plans, model systems, data management, quality control and analytic procedures are to be discussed as appropriate to the proposed investigation. Preliminary data/results that support the hypotheses or research strategies chosen should be discussed in this section.
- A brief justification of the experimental design selected should be included, in addition to the alternative strategies considered during the development of the project plans. Brief justifications or arguments supporting the choices of instruments, methods or models chosen will be helpful to reviewers. Outline the plans for data management, quality control and analysis.
- Mention alternative strategies where appropriate. If relevant to the project and nature of the research work, discuss plans for sharing data, samples or resources with other investigators. Describe any significant collaborations that are beyond the budget of this proposal and have not been previously described. All references, figures and photographs must be included in the three pages allowed for this section. Use the reference style that is most common in the major journal(s) discipline, specialty or sub- specialty.

4. Available Resources & Budget Justification - 2 pages

Provide information about the resources that:

- Are available and necessary to support the proposed project and
- Can be accessed for the duration of the project without additional funds.
- Budget and expenses must be reported in U.S. dollars.

List and describe facilities and space, equipment, animals and/or human subject or clinical populations, and any other relevant physical or human resources. Identify all new resources that the proposed project will require. Include a brief justification and rationale for the individual line items in the proposed online budget that you are requesting funding.

- A total of \$5,000 over a two-three year period not to exceed \$2,500 per year (*if you request the full \$2,500 for 2 years and are requesting a 3 year award you will not be able to request travel funds for one of those years*) must be allocated to support registration and travel to the annual Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC), a condition of the award.

5. Biosketch – 4 pages each

A biosketch should be included for both the **applicant and mentor**.

6. Letters of Reference

Limited to 3 letters and no more than 3 pages each. *A letter of reference from the mentor is not necessary as they are submitting a Statement of Mentorship.*

Mentoring selections may include early-career researchers and/or mid-career scientists who choose to shift into Alzheimer's and related dementia research. The applicant and proposed mentor must specify a mechanism for ensuring effective mentoring. The application should contain a plan for and an evaluation strategy of the mentoring process for enhancing diversity in the professional research workforce. Specific benchmarks are outlined below and considered by the Alzheimer's Association as critical for the development of early-career investigators. A successful mentorship plan should include some of these benchmarks but should not be limited to these alone.

REQUIRED benchmarks:

- Attendance at an Association-sponsored event for new investigators at the Alzheimer's Association's International Conference (AAIC)
- Acceptance of an abstract at AAIC
- Mandatory documentation of hours spent on face-to-face mentoring
- Citation of specific exercises of mentorship such as supervision of manuscript writing and submission or grant writing and submission
- Specific instances of the facilitation of networking, introductions to colleagues and/or inclusion in discussions at scientific meetings
- Submission of funding proposal(s) to other funding agencies, including Alzheimer's Association, National Institutes of Health or National Science Foundation, Medical Research Council (UK), Canadian Institutes of Health Research, etc.

SUGGESTED benchmark (not required)

- Submission of an application to the National Institute on Aging's Summer Institute

Eligibility: Please note, individuals applying to the program will be accepted from postdoctoral fellows with full time positions at their respective institution who have less than 10 years of research experience after receipt of their terminal degree. Individuals who have a position of an Assistant Professorship or above are not eligible.

For individuals who are at non-academic institutions, please contact the Alzheimer's Association at grantsapp@alz.org to verify your eligibility.

Ineligibility: Although it is unlikely that individuals will have current Alzheimer's Association awards, applications from currently funded investigators who are delinquent in submitting required reports and other deliverables on active grants. Investigators that have previous Alzheimer's Association awards closed as 'Incomplete' are not eligible to apply without exception. **This policy will be strictly adhered to with no exceptions.**

Deadlines and award dates: Letters of Intent must be received by 5:00 PM EASTERN STANDARD TIME, **October 9, 2017**. Letters of Intent will not be accepted after this date. No exceptions will be made.

Applications must be received by 5:00 PM EASTERN STANDARD TIME, November 28, 2017.

Scientific and technical review will be conducted from November 2017 – January 2018.

The second-level review by the Medical and Scientific Advisory Council will be conducted during January 2018. Funding will be awarded by **February 15, 2018**.

Applications will be reviewed with special attention to:

- Quality and nature of the training to be provided and the institutional, departmental, and mentor-specific training environment, this includes available resources to support the applicant in their training (30 percent)
- Quality and emphasis of applicant and originality of the research plan (40 percent)
- Significance of the question being studied, quality of the work plan and the impact-risk of the proposal (30 percent)

Mechanism of award, reporting requirements and allowable costs: The mechanism of the award is an individual research grant; this award is made to the individual and managed by their institution. Significant emphasis will be on the mentor and letters of reference provided in the application. The mentor is expected to contribute a statement regarding commitment to the applicant. The maximum allowable duration is three years (minimum 2 years). Annual scientific progress and financial reports are required from both the applicant and the mentor throughout the award period.

Continuation of the grant over the awarded duration is contingent upon the timely receipt of scientific progress and financial reports as well as a mentor's report outlining progress toward meeting required benchmarks.

Budget: A "budget summary" for the proposed research project is required and must be submitted with the application and within the allowable two-page limit. However, if the application is to be awarded, a more detailed budget will be required and must be approved before the disbursement of funds. **Your budget must not exceed the maximum amount of the award, \$155,000 (\$150K for direct research and \$5K for travel) and may not exceed \$60,000 (direct and indirect costs) in a given year.** A total of \$5,000 over a three year period not to exceed \$2,500 per year (*if you request the full \$2,500 for 2 years and are requesting a 3 year award you will not be able to request travel funds for one of those years*) must be allocated to support registration and travel to the annual Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC), a condition of the award. Indirect costs are capped at no more than ten percent (10%). The remaining funds, \$10,000 to the applicant and \$10,000 to the primary mentor, will be awarded upon successful completion of the three year (minimum 2 years) program and should not be included in your budget.

Allowable costs under this award:

It is required that most of the funds awarded under this program be used for direct research support.

- Purchase and care of laboratory animals
- Small pieces of laboratory equipment and laboratory supplies (**purchases over \$10,000 require prior approval**)
- Computer equipment if used strictly for data collection (**require prior approval**)
- Travel (up to \$5,000 max over 2-3yr award to travel to the annual Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC), a condition of the award)
- Salary for the principal investigator, scientific (including post-doctoral fellows) and technical staff (including laboratory technicians and administrative support related directly to the funded project)

Direct Costs not allowed under this award include:

- Tuition
- Computer hardware or software for investigators
- Rent for laboratory/office space (should be included in the indirect costs)
- Construction or renovation costs
- Facilities fee
- Salary and/or compensation for Alzheimer's Association Staff or members of the Alzheimer's Association Medical and Scientific Advisory Council (MSAC)

For more information: Contact grantsapp@alz.org or call 1.312.335.5747 or 1.312.335.5862.