

# INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS FOR NATIONAL KIDNEY FOUNDATION

## YOUNG INVESTIGATOR GRANT PROGRAM

### OVERVIEW OF REVISED NKF RESEARCH SUPPORT POLICIES

I. The intent of the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) is to fund the most meritorious research projects within budgetary constraints imposed by the limits of the programmatic areas of the NKF. Both basic and clinical research activities will be funded, after careful and balanced peer review by appropriate review committees, with an emphasis on the support of high-quality clinical investigation.

II. During the peer review process, the responsiveness of the individual application to the research agendas of the NKF will be one of the elements used to judge merit and assign ranking for both the clinical and basic research applications. Applicants will be asked on the face sheet of the application to provide a description of the applicability of the application to the research agenda of the NKF, with specific reference to any KDOQI Guideline upon which the research project impacts. **(Please see [KDOQI Research Recommendations](#) and [“NKF Research & Training Agenda”](#))**

III. The NKF intends to fund original research, and wants to discourage submission of applications that do not represent the original thoughts of the applicants. While it is appropriate for an application to fit into an overall organizing theme of the parent division or institution, the originality of the applicant's proposal and the feasibility of accomplishing its aims, within the time and fiscal constraints of the NKF award, will be important factors included in its evaluation.

Young Investigator Applications will now be reviewed as a mentored career-development award, and the mentor's Biosketch and other support statements are to be included in an application. It is important for the success of these applications that the applicant's proposal represents a new area of research that is clearly independent from the mentor's activities. While there may well be overall thematic relevance and synergy, it is essential that the Young Investigator is clearly embarking on an independent research career. A signed statement from the Applicant and the Mentor assuring the primary involvement of the applicant in writing the proposal and the career development plans for the Applicant will be required as a part of the application. It is permissible for an applicant to have a concurrent NIH K series award and a Young Investigator Grant from the NKF. The applicant should provide a statement of the budgetary and scientific overlap and relatedness of the two applications.

IV. Annual reports will be required for all funded proposals that detail the progress and publications related to the project. Advances related to the Research Agenda of the NKF, especially as defined in the KDOQI Guidelines, will be of special interest. Any concurrent application for additional or parallel funding from other agencies by the Young Investigator or Mentor should be described in the Annual Progress Report.

### NATIONAL KIDNEY FOUNDATION YOUNG INVESTIGATOR GRANT PROGRAM

The National Kidney Foundation (NKF) recognizes that future improvements in the treatment and prevention of kidney disease will rest largely on the accomplishments of individuals now commencing their investigative work. Young investigators are often hampered in their progress by difficulty in obtaining suitable financial support for their research during the formative period of their careers. The National Kidney Foundation has established a Young Investigator Grant Program to help alleviate this

problem. The purpose of the Young Investigator Grant Program is to support research in the fields of nephrology, urology and related disciplines by individuals who have completed fellowship training and who hold junior faculty positions at university-affiliated medical centers in the United States. Further information on the requirements, terms of support and mechanism of application is given below.

### **Eligibility**

Applications will be considered from individuals who will have completed research training in nephrology, urology or closely related fields prior to the start of the grant award and who intend to pursue research directly related to these areas. At the time funding begins (July 1, 2010), the applicant must hold a full-time appointment to a faculty position at a university or an equivalent position as a scientist on the staff of a research oriented institution, e.g., National Institutes of Health (NIH) or other research organization, in the United States. Customarily, the appropriate faculty rank is that of Assistant Professor. (In some institutions a title other than Assistant Professor, e.g. Instructor, is used to designate junior faculty status; individuals at that rank in such institutions are eligible to apply for a Young Investigator Grant.) Qualifications should be documented in the biosketch (limit: four pages).

Young Investigator Grants will be awarded to individuals no later than four years after initial appointment to a faculty (or equivalent) position or after appointment to a staff scientist (or equivalent) position in a research organization. Because of this policy, candidates who received a faculty appointment before July 1, 2006 would not be eligible for this award in this funding cycle. It is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate that he/she satisfies the eligibility requirements for a Young Investigator Grant. Eligibility rules will be strictly enforced. Anyone who may not be certain as to his/her eligibility should request an advisory opinion from the NKF research department before submitting an application.

Young Investigator Grants are primarily intended to support research by individuals holding M.D. or Ph.D. degrees who are commencing careers on the faculty of medical schools or research institutions. In all cases the applicant's research and career goals must be directed to the study of normal or abnormal kidney function or of diseases of the kidney and urinary tract. Only one investigator in an institution will be supported in any funding cycle by a Young Investigator Grant. **Since the NKF research support program is an integral part of the Foundation's overall scientific mission, it is expected that candidates for support pursuant to this funding mechanism participate as dues-paying professional members of the National Kidney Foundation, Inc.** A portion of each professional member's dues payment is contributed to the NKF Research Endowment.

### **Terms of Support**

Initial support for awards commencing July 1, 2010 will be provided for one year in a total amount not to exceed \$50,000. Although funding for a second year of support is not guaranteed, the investigator may request an additional year's funding at \$50,000 per annum in the initial application. Funds provided by a Young Investigator Grant will be administered by the appropriate fiscal department of the investigator's institution. Funds may be used only for salaries, equipment, supplies, animals, clinical research costs or other expenses directly related to the conduct of the proposed research. Up to \$15,000 of the grant may be expended for salary and fringe benefits of the principal investigator per year provided that such expenditures are justified in the application. A maximum of \$30,000 in salary support will be provided to the recipient of NKF Young Investigator Grants during the term of the award, including extensions, if applicable. No more than **\$500 per year** may be used for travel by the

investigator to national or international meetings, excluding travel in connection with invited presentations at the NKF Clinical Meetings. Funds for a Young Investigator Grant may not be used for any of the following:

1. Indirect costs or overhead
2. Costs of patient care
3. Constructing or renovating facilities
4. Furniture or office equipment
5. Secretarial services
6. Honoraria or membership dues
7. Textbooks or periodicals
8. Repair or service contract costs on institutional equipment
9. Entertainment

Any changes in the budget proposed in the original application or in subsequent amendments must be approved in advance by the NKF Research Office.

### **Other Support**

The National Kidney Foundation anticipates that investigators who have or successfully compete for funds from other agencies may not require support by a Young Investigator Grant. For example, if, during the period of support by a Young Investigator Grant, the investigator obtains an R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health or a Merit Award from the Veterans Administration, the Young Investigator Grant will be terminated at the start of funding by the other agency. Awards which are explicitly or primarily limited to salary support for the investigator or other faculty are excluded from this restriction. **Individuals who have received K08 or K23 awards from the NIH are eligible for funding under the NKF Young Investigator Grant Program.** To assist the Young Investigator Grant Committee in implementing this policy, the application should list all research projects (either funded or with funding pending) in which the applicant or mentor is or will be participating. The scientific and/or budgetary relationship between the proposed Young Investigator Grant and any other research funding should be explained.

### **Form of Application**

Please access application forms at:

<http://www.kidney.org/professionals/research/>

Completed applications should be submitted electronically to the same address. One hard copy original, with all signatures affixed, should be mailed to the following address. Statements must accompany the application demonstrating that appropriate reviews have been processed by human subjects, animal care or other committees of the institution.

Young Investigator Grant Program  
National Kidney Foundation  
30 East 33<sup>rd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10016

Most of the sections of the application do not require explanation. However, the following requirements should be noted:

## COVER SHEET

It is the responsibility of applicants to characterize their research as clinical or basic and check the appropriate box on the cover sheet of the application. Proposals will be assigned to either the Basic Science Committee or the Clinical Research Committee based upon that designation. Please use the following definition from the Nathan Report as a guide. The Nathan Report describes three categories of clinical research: (1) Patient-Oriented Research, defined as research conducted with human subjects (or on material of human origin such as tissues, specimens and cognitive phenomena) for which an investigator (or colleague) directly interacts with human subjects in either an outpatient or inpatient setting. Elements of patient-oriented research activities, as defined, include but are not limited to development of new technologies, mechanisms of human disease, therapeutic interventions and clinical trials. Excluded are in vitro studies that utilize human tissues but do not deal directly with patients. (2) Epidemiologic and Biobehavioral Studies. (3) Outcomes Research and Health Services Research.

## MENTOR'S LETTER OF SUPPORT

The Young Investigator Grant had been changed to a mentored award, effective with applications submitted for the 2006-2007 funding cycle. Since NKF Young Investigator Grants are available to holders of "K" awards from the National Institutes of Health, the Investigator should have the same mentor for both funding mechanisms.

## DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN'S LETTER OF COMMITMENT

A letter of commitment from the chairman of the applicant's department must be submitted with an application for a Young Investigator Grant. If the Chairman of the Department is also the candidate's mentor, it is necessary to submit a letter from him/her in each capacity. The letter must include the following information:

1. A statement that the applicant, if awarded a Young Investigator Grant, will have at least 75 percent time available to pursue research. The distribution of the balance of the time among other duties (clinical, teaching, etc.) should be specified.
2. A description of the amount and specific location of laboratory space or other institutional resources available for the use of the applicant.
3. A statement of the date and title of the initial appointment of the applicant to a faculty or staff scientist position at the institution. If the appointment is other than an assistant professorship, the letter should state the institution's policy for junior faculty or scientist positions.
4. A statement that salary support and continuation of faculty appointment of the applicant are not contingent on the success of the application for a Young Investigator Grant.

## DOCUMENTATION OF COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Applicant should provide letter(s) from consultant(s) indicating their willingness to assist in the proposed project and any conditions on such assistance, if applicable.

## LAY SUMMARY

A brief (150 words) description of the research that the Young Investigator proposes to undertake should be written as a summary for a lay audience. The summary should include a brief discussion of the proposed research and an indication of its potential benefits to the patient with kidney disease. Scientific jargon, abbreviations and complex discussions should be avoided.

## RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The research proposal should be divided into the following parts:

Part A. Specific Aims (**limited to one page**)

Part B. Significance and background (**limited to three pages**).

Part C. Preliminary studies (**limited to six pages**)

Part D. Experimental design and methods (**limited to seven pages**)

The candidate should explicitly acknowledge limitations in the research design and provide alternative approaches which would be employed should aspects of the research design be unproductive.

Part E. Bibliography

The page limitations for the different parts of the Research Plan are the maximum acceptable. Eleven point proportional font is the smallest print permitted. There must be no more than 60 lines per page. Margins should be greater than or equal to 0.5 in. **An application may be denied scientific review if it exceeds required number of pages or permitted type size.**

An Appendix may be used for presenting data tabulation, figures, graphs, submitted manuscripts, abstracts and papers. Any Appendix should not contain further descriptive material.

## REFERENCES

Three references should be submitted separately from the application on the form provided in the application materials and each reference should be e-mailed to [research@kidney.org](mailto:research@kidney.org) by the **Tuesday, December 1** deadline. One of these letters should be from the sponsor of the research performed during the applicant's research training. If a reference is submitted by the chairman of the applicant's department, it should be separate from and in addition to the required letter of commitment (see above).

## STATEMENT OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND ELIGIBILITY

This form should be completed jointly by the candidate for a Young Investigator Grant and his/her

Mentor, and signed by both. An assurance of the primary involvement of the applicant in writing the proposal should be included. The statement should describe plans for career development and explain how a National Kidney Foundation Young Investigator Grant will help the grantee to take steps towards an independent research career, rather than merely supplement funding from other agencies. (For example, the NKF Young Investigator Grant could prepare a grantee for a K24 award from the National Institute of Health or provide seed money for a K24 application.) The applicant should highlight opportunities to acquire new skills and learn new techniques that the Young Investigator Grant will make possible, such as training in epidemiology and statistics, molecular biology, translation research and research methodology.

### **Helpful Hints**

Candidates might find it helpful to review the guidelines for grant preparation which are available on the web site of the National Institutes of Health. You can find this information by visiting <http://deainfo.nci.nih.gov/extra/extdocs/apprep.htm>. 40 applications for Young Investigator Grants were submitted during the last funding cycle. From that applicant pool, seven grants were awarded.

### **Deadline and Peer Review Process**

Applications and all supporting documents for Young Investigator Grants must be submitted electronically on or before **Tuesday, December 1, 2009**. The hard copy of the application, with all signatures affixed, must be postmarked no later than Tuesday, December 1, 2009. Applications received after this date will not be considered. Applications will be reviewed by an NKF study section, using outside reviewers, as necessary. Successful applicants will be notified in **Spring, 2010** and funds will be made available to them effective **July 1, 2010**. Because of limited resources, NKF is not able to provide written critiques of applications.

### **Funding Agreement**

Successful candidates will be required to execute an agreement that incorporates the terms and conditions of research support from the National Kidney Foundation described in these instructions.

### **Reporting Requirements**

In carrying out its stewardship for the resources devoted to the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) research program and to provide feedback to the NKF benefactors who make this research program support possible, it is the policy of the NKF that its membership should be kept informed of the research progress of NKF Young Investigators, the status of their careers and the effectiveness of the NKF Young Investigator Grant Program. By accepting a National Kidney Foundation Young Investigator Grant, the investigator and the grantee institution agree to the following reporting requirements:

The Young Investigator will provide a Progress Report written for a lay audience at the end of each year of support. In addition the Young Investigator will be invited to submit a scientific abstract at the conclusion of each calendar year (December 31, year “x”) describing work accomplished during the preceding academic year (July 1 year “x-1”-June 30, year “x”) in which NKF support was provided. The submitted abstracts will be reviewed and may be

selected for presentation (poster, oral) at a special session during the following year's (year "x+1") Annual Clinical Nephrology Meetings of the NKF.

The Young Investigator agrees to provide a reprint of every publication (including abstracts) resulting from research supported by the NKF, even if published after termination of the grant.

Results of research supported by the National Kidney Foundation may be made available to the public through appropriate scientific channels. All publications will bear the statement:

**“The work was supported by the (name of benefactor, e.g. American Society of Nephrology, Satellite Dialysis Centers) Young Investigator Grant of the National Kidney Foundation.”**

The Young Investigator may be contacted after the completion of this award for periodic updates on various aspects of his/her career, including appointments, publications, support from research grants or contracts, honors and awards, professional activities and other information that may be necessary for the continued evaluation of the impact of the NKF Young Investigator Grant Program.

Applications from institutions which fail to comply with the above requirements could have support discontinued and be denied consideration for future funding.

### **Continuation of Funding**

Second year funding will be considered upon receipt of an institutional letter certifying that the investigator is still on its faculty, is actively doing research, specifying the source and amount of other research project support and certifying that any extramural financial support does not duplicate the Young Investigator Grant. An audited expense report of the previous grant period is also required, as well as the above described progress report.