

**INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS FOR
NATIONAL KIDNEY FOUNDATION RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS**

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 proposal 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.

For basic and clinical research fellowship applications, the mentor's Biosketch and other support statements are to be included in an application. While there may be appropriate thematic continuity with the mentor's funded research, a detailed statement of the applicant's role in preparing the application and a description of the novel aspect of the application with reference to the mentor's funding will be required.

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 Fellow or Sponsor should be described in the Annual Progress Report.

NATIONAL KIDNEY FOUNDATION RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP POLICIES

The purpose of National Kidney Foundation (NKF) Research Fellowships is: (1) to foster training of young and new investigators with the potential of making contributions to the understanding and cure of kidney diseases; (2) to foster, through training fellows, kidney-related research that is of high merit; and (3) to encourage high quality applicants who want to make a career change into academic Nephrology.

A. RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP ELIGIBILITY:

1. Field of Interest

The candidate's career goals should include a clear commitment to the study and treatment of diseases and functions of the kidney.

2. Years of Training

At the time of the activation of an award from the National Kidney Foundation, the candidate may have completed four years, but not more than 4.5 years, of research training (in addition to clinical training) beyond a doctoral degree (M.D., Ph.D., D.O., or its equivalent). For those applying for a second year of a National Kidney Foundation Fellowship (competitive renewal), they may have completed 5 years, but not more than 5.5 years of research training beyond the doctoral degree at the time of activation of the award. (The fellowship award is activated on July 1 of the year following submission of the application.) Fellowships supported jointly by the American Society of Transplant Surgeons are intended for surgical residents in PGY 2 or 3.

No more than ten years should have elapsed between the last doctoral degree and the receipt of this award (for residency, fellowship, and research training). Exceptions to this rule (based upon military or public health service, career changes, necessity to repeat training in the U.S. that may have been already completed abroad) **must be explicitly justified in the sponsor's letter**.

For foreign applicants who have a degree, training and appointments outside the United States, it is the responsibility of the sponsor to specify the equivalency of the degrees, training and appointments in terms of U.S. terminology.

The candidate may not have or have had at any time a faculty position at the level of Assistant Professor at any academic institution.

3. Other support

The candidate may not simultaneously hold an NKF Fellowship and another full fellowship award such as an NIH post-doctoral research fellowship. The Fellow's institution, however, may supplement the support provided by the National Kidney Foundation.

4. Citizenship

The National Kidney Foundation research program is designed to train U.S. citizens. However, applications from outstanding foreign citizens for work in the United States will be accepted for consideration. Whenever applications are

judged to be of equal merit, priority will be given to U.S. citizens and to applicants who are likely to remain in academic medicine.

5. Membership

Since the NKF research fellowship program is an integral part of the Foundation's overall scientific mission, it is expected that Sponsors will support NKF as dues-paying professional members. A portion of each professional member's dues payment is contributed to the NKF Research Endowment.

6. Number of Applications and Awards Per Institution

There is no limit to the number of applications which can be submitted and receive scientific peer review, from any program or institution. However:

NKF will fund no more than two fellowships per institution per funding cycle.

Each fellow must have separate sponsor.

7. Percent of Effort

A minimum of 75 percent time in research should be committed in the year(s) of NKF fellowship support.

8. Advisory Opinion

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.

B. FORM OF APPLICATION:

Please access application forms at www.kidney.org/professionals/research

1. 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 for review 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.

Please note: In the spirit of the NIH Road Map, the NKF encourages proposals that afford the opportunity for multidisciplinary training.

2. Sponsor's Letter of Support/Division Director Statement

The process of applying for training support is itself part of the career development experience. Therefore, the sponsor should specifically comment on the role of the candidate in preparing the proposal for NKF funding. The letter from the sponsor should contain a description of the plans for the fellow both during and after the fellowship year(s). The letter from the sponsor should specify how the proposed research program will provide the applicant with the necessary skills and training to pursue an independent investigative career upon completion of the training period and the career expectation for the fellow. The sponsor must carefully and unequivocally detail previous training in order to allow assessment of eligibility. The division director must also submit a statement of career expectations for the fellow. If the sponsor and division director are the same person, it is necessary to submit a letter from him/her in each capacity.

3. 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.

4. Biosketch Requirements

A biosketch of the applicant and sponsor (**maximum 4 pages each**) should be attached as well as a list of relevant publications of each. **No reprints are permitted.** The sponsor should be the direct supervisor of the research project in which the fellow will participate. Prior, concurrent, and pending research support should be specified and any apparent budgetary and/or scientific overlap explained.

The curriculum vitae of other individuals involved in direct supervision of the research should be included.

5. Lay Summary

A brief (150 words) description of the research that the fellow 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 the potential benefits to the patient with kidney disease. Scientific jargon, abbreviations and complex discussions should be avoided.

6. Research Proposal

A precise description of the proposed research to be undertaken during the tenure of the fellowship should include statements about the AIMS and SIGNIFICANCE of the project, the METHODS to be used, PRELIMINARY WORK of the applicant and RELEVANT RESEARCH of others. This should not exceed three single-spaced pages, INCLUDING references, in standard typewriter size lettering. (11 point proportional font is the smallest print permitted), with margins (greater than or equal to 0.5 in); there must be no more than 60 lines per page. Appendices, addenda and attachments are not permitted. **Applications not adhering to these specifications will be disqualified and not considered further. The application should be written by the fellowship applicant, with the supervision of the sponsor.**

All supporting material (except reference forms) must accompany the hard copy of the application at the time of submission, including statements demonstrating that appropriate reviews have been processed by human subject, animal care or other committees of the institution.

7. References

Two references in addition to a letter from the sponsor (preferably from previous mentors) 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 by the **Tuesday, December 1, 2009** deadline. (This is not required for renewal applications and applications for a third year of support).

8. Statement of Eligibility

The applicant must include a brief statement, not over 250 words, of his or her career plans after completing fellowship training. The applicant should describe the postdoctoral research training that he or she will have had prior to commencing the NKF Fellowship. This description is to include dates detailing the length of training. The candidate must carefully and unequivocally detail previous training in order to allow assessment of eligibility.

9. Description of Training Program

A brief description of the training program (not to exceed 450 words) should be submitted. It should state clearly the proposed activities of the fellow in research, teaching and service areas, and also define his/her role in the proposed project.

In addition, the training record of the sponsor should be supplied. The information provided should include the total number of pre- and postdoctoral individuals trained and provide information on a representative five (5). List their present employing organization and position titles or occupations.

10. Progress Report

This report must be provided by applicants for a third year of fellowship funding and those seeking a competitive renewal for a second year.

C. REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS:

All applications will be evaluated by a peer-review body of the National Kidney Foundation. Applications will not be considered unless they contain all of the information requested in item B. Careful adherence to limitations of length in all sections is necessary to ensure fair review of the application. The most effective application is one in which the sponsor and applicant have collaborated to organize the specific aims, background and research plans within the three page limitation. The criteria for review include an evaluation of the applicant, the sponsor, the training program/environment, and the project proposed and its relationship to the research mission of the NKF. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions in **the spring of 2010**. Because of limited resources, NKF is not able to provide written critiques of applications.

D. TERM AND AMOUNT OF AWARDS:

1. Stipends for fellows whose awards begin in the 2010-2011 academic year will be \$50,000 per annum.

2. NKF fellowship funding cannot be used for travel expenses, project costs or overhead charges. However it is permissible to pay fringe benefits from NKF fellowship awards.

3. Applicants can apply for either a one or two-year fellowship award. A limited number of awards for a third year of fellowship support will be available for individuals completing the second year of an NKF research fellowship on June 30, 2010. Awards will commence **July 1, 2010**.

- a.** Applications for a two-year award should reflect the research which will be undertaken during the entire two-year period. Only a brief progress report will be required in June, 2011 from those individuals who receive a two-year award. A reapplication will not be necessary.
- b.** One-year awards can be renewed for a second year. Applications for a second year of support will be evaluated by the Review Committee in the same competitive manner as the original application. For those who have received a one year award for the period 2009-2010 and who desire a second year of support, a complete new application, including a Progress Report on work done in the first year of support, must be submitted by the deadline date of **Tuesday, December 1**. The new application should indicate the additional work necessary to complete the proposed project. If the re-application project should have been completed in the first year of funding, renewal will not be awarded.
- c.** Individuals completing two years of training pursuant to an NKF Fellowship may be eligible for a third year of funding to gain additional training in order to

become independent investigators. A separate application will be required for this support and will be evaluated on a competitive basis. A third year of funding will not be provided to enable the Fellow to carry out the project proposed in his/her initial application for fellowship support.

- d.** The research proposal for a third year of funding should be a logical extension of the investigator's research interest. Research in a new laboratory to gain diversity in research skills is permitted. Applications for a third year of funding must include a one-page progress report relating to the specific aims of the initial fellowship proposal.
- 4.** The NKF will fund a maximum of three consecutive years of fellowship training. If other agencies have provided support for a candidate's research training, NKF funds will not be available to support more than a total of four years of fellowship training for that candidate.

E. 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 support possible, it is the policy of the Scientific Advisory Board that the NKF membership at large should be kept informed of the progress in research and training of NKF Fellows, the status of their careers and the effectiveness of the NKF Research Fellowship Program. By accepting a National Kidney Foundation Fellowship, all Fellows and their Sponsors agree to the following reporting requirements:

- 1.** Fellow and Sponsor agree to provide the National Kidney Foundation with a Progress Report written for a lay audience at the end of each fellowship year. At the conclusion of each calendar year (December 31, year "x"), Fellow and Sponsor will be invited to submit to the National Kidney Foundation a scientific abstract of the work accomplished during the preceding academic year (July 1 "year x-1" to June 30 "year x") during 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. Presenters will be provided a travel grant to the meeting.
- 2.** Fellow and Sponsor agree to provide a reprint of every publication (including abstracts) resulting from research in which the NKF Fellow participated during his/her Fellowship year, even if published after completion of the Fellowship.
- 3.** 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:

“This work was supported by a Research Fellowship from the National Kidney Foundation.” [If a matching fellowship, funds contributed by the local National Kidney Foundation Affiliate should also be acknowledged

or, in the case of outside support, the name of the relevant funding agency, e.g. American Society of Transplant Surgeons, should also be included in the acknowledgment.]

4. Fellow and Sponsor may be contacted after the completion of this award for periodic updates on various aspects of the Fellow's employment history, publications, support from research grants or contracts, honors and awards, professional activities and other information that is necessary for the continued evaluation of the impact of the NKF Research Fellowship Program.

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

F. FUNDING AGREEMENT:

Successful candidates and their Sponsors 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.

G. SUCCESS RATES:

81 applications for NKF Postdoctoral Research Fellowships were submitted during the last funding cycle. From that applicant pool, 18 fellowships were awarded.

H. WHEN TO SUBMIT:

Applications must be submitted electronically on or before Tuesday, December 1, 2009.

I. WHERE TO SUBMIT:

Candidates should submit proposals electronically. However, one hard-copy original, with all signatures affixed, should be sent to:

Research Fellowship Committee
National Kidney Foundation, Inc.
30 East 33rd Street
New York, NY 10016

and postmarked no later than Tuesday, December 1, 2009.

Candidates for the Folkert Belzer Fellowship of the American Society of Transplant Surgeons (ASTS) and the National Kidney Foundation should contact the ASTS for application procedures at (703) 684-5990.