

Instructions for Underrepresented Minorities in Ataxia Pre-doctoral Research Fellowship Application

Introduction

The National Ataxia Foundation (NAF) was organized in 1957 in the state of Minnesota as a voluntary non-profit health organization. In its continuing efforts to find the cause, treatments, and cure for the ataxias, the National Ataxia Foundation (NAF) provides limited, short-term financial support of ataxia research.

NAF's Research Grant Program funds only the best research proposals that are most likely to result in research breakthroughs that can be applied to diagnosis, better patient care, or treatment of people with ataxia.

This award is intended for underrepresented minorities (URM), with priority given to Black or African Americans. URM trainees are defined as individuals who self-identify as belonging to one or more of the following racial or ethnic groups: Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, and American Indian or Alaskan Native.

The National Ataxia Foundation uses **proposalCENTRAL** to facilitate the grant application and review process. This document includes NAF policies and guidelines relevant to its research program. The instructions to submit the full application is on the **proposalCENTRAL** website.

Description

This URM Pre-doctoral research fellowship is a competitive, non-renewable, merit-based award intended to enhance research and/or clinical training of promising students who are matriculated in pre-doctoral or clinical health professional degree training programs and who intend careers as scientists, physician-scientists or other clinician-scientists aimed at continuing ataxia basic science, translational science or clinical research towards the goal of serving individuals with ataxia.

This award provides partial support for study and research and may be used to support pre-doctoral students who are pursuing dissertation research with an ataxia-relevant theme. Proposals across the spectrum of basic, translational, and clinical research are welcome.

Because URM are underrepresented at every STEM degree level relative to their proportions in the U.S. college-age population, this award is intended for underrepresented minorities (URM). URM trainees are defined as individuals who self-identify as belonging to one or more of the following racial or ethnic groups: Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, and American Indian or Alaskan Native.

The funds granted will be up to \$50,000 per award over two years (\$25,000 a year contingent on a year 1 progress report). Number of awards is contingent on funds available.

Eligibility

At the time of application, the applicant must:

- Be enrolled in a post-baccalaureate Ph.D., M.D., Ph.D/M.D. or doctorate in nursing or equivalent clinical health science doctoral degree program, who seeks research training with a sponsor prior to embarking upon a research career.
- Be a full-time student working towards their degree.
- Identify as an Underrepresented Minority

At the time of award activation, the candidate must have successfully completed their qualifying exams, or equivalent, in their respective programs and be able to devote effort to research or activities related to the development into an independent researcher or a related career aimed at improving lives of those living with ataxia through clinical care or research discoveries.

Mentor

It is imperative that the fellow receives counsel and direction from at least one mentor who is an established investigator interested in the progress of the project and has demonstrated expertise in ataxia research and/or clinical care for those with ataxia.

A prospective fellow must have primary responsibility for the writing and the preparation of the Fellowship application, with the understanding that the mentor will play a significant part in providing guidance to the applicant. The mentor does not need to be affiliated with the university where the applicant is enrolled, but should be available for mentorship via email, video conferencing, etc.

If you need assistance connecting with a mentor who specializes in Ataxia, please contact the NAF at beth@ataxia.org.

Guidelines

1. Indirect costs are prohibited from being applied to NAF grant awards.
2. A maximum of 50% of award can be applied to school dues. The remaining amount of the award must be used to support the research project.
3. The National Ataxia Foundation will retain the right to unilaterally cancel any awards for non-compliance or non-performance.
4. Awards are not transferable.
5. No-cost extensions (NCE) will be considered for extenuating circumstances and require approval from NAF's research director. Please submit requests for an NCE to beth@ataxia.org.
6. Applicants must be a US citizen or legal permanent resident of the US, must be enrolled at an accredited US university, and must be within two years of doctoral level graduation date.
7. The one-year funding term is negotiable based on your institution's academic calendar.

proposalCENTRAL

To utilize the proposalCENTRAL online portal to submit the application, a user account needs to be created. Use this weblink <https://proposalcentral.com> to create an account.

Submission of Application

Using the proposalCENTRAL online portal, please submit the full application on or before March 14, 2022. The full application will require basic information about the applicant/institution and the following attachments:

From Fellow:

- Personal Statement (Essay indicating your dedication to the ataxia disease space)
- Biosketch (example found at: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>)
- Scientific Abstract
- Lay Summary
- Summary of Specific Aims (1 page maximum)
- Background and Significance (1 page maximum)
- Preliminary Studies (1 page maximum, optional)
- Research Plan (3 page maximum)
- Budget Details
- References
- Letter of Recommendation from Mentor(s)
- Signed Signature Pages from the Institution
- Institutional banking instructions for domestic or international partners

From Mentor:

- Publication List
- Biosketch

Review Dates

Review by Medical Research Advisory Board takes place late March through mid-April.

Written notification of awards will be sent in early May 2022. *Please do not call NAF about the status of your grant application.*

Review Process

All applications are reviewed and evaluated by a review committee appointed by NAF's Research Director. Members of NAF's Medical and Research Advisory Board participate in the review. The review committee will score and prioritize all grants received by the deadline and make funding recommendations. The Board of Directors will consider the recommendations and make the final approval and funding determinations.

Funding of awards is based on availability of funds, the priority score assigned to each application, innovation, and the relevance to the ataxias. Applications with high scores in relevance to ataxia and scientific merit will receive higher priority.

Disbursement of Funds

Awards are for one year only. Checks or electronic transfers will be issued in May and sent directly to the institution of the funded researcher named in the application. Electronic payment is preferred.

Non-funded applicants will also be notified.

Change in Status of Awarded

Awards are to remain solely with the designated awardee and may not be transferred to any other personnel. If a recipient decides not to continue work in ataxia research, the award will be terminated. In the event that NAF terminated an award, the award amount will be pro-rated for the number of months it was in effect, and the pro-rated unused funds shall be returned to NAF. If an investigator changes

institutions, the award may be transferred, contingent upon the successor institution's commitment to support the research for the full remaining term of the award.

Publications

When a paper or poster is published or presented before a scientific organization by an awardee, based on the work supported by an NAF grant, an electronic copy of the paper or a description of the presentation should be sent to the National Ataxia Foundation. All papers, posters and press releases shall carry a credit line to the National Ataxia Foundation. In addition, a copy of any press release regarding the study funded by NAF should also be e-mailed to NAF at beth@ataxia.org.

Additional Opportunities

The awardee is invited to attend the International Congress for Ataxia Research (ICAR) planned for the fall of 2022. The awardee can apply to present their work as an oral or poster presentation depending on the ICAR Scientific Committee assignment. More information regarding specific dates and travel will be available by mid-March 2022. Keep up to date with the latest ICAR information at www.ataxiacongress.org.

Reports/Deliverables

A final scientific report and lay summary is to be submitted to the National Ataxia Foundation within four (4) months of completion of the research project. The scientific report is reviewed by NAF's Medical Research Advisory Board but is not made public.

Because the National Ataxia Foundation takes seriously its responsibility to report to its members on the use of their research contributions, the layperson final summary will be published in the organization's newsletter and posted on NAF's website. The summary must be written in such a manner as to be understood by the average layperson and should not contain privileged or unpublished information.

A full financial report detailing how grant award funds were utilized is due 4 months after end of project.

Definitions

Indirect Costs: Indirect costs (sometimes known as Facilities and Administrative costs) are defined as costs incurred when conducting or supporting research and service, but which cannot be readily identified as benefiting research projects. Examples of indirect costs include, but are not limited to:

- Plant operation and maintenance: utilities, janitorial services, routine maintenance, and repairs, etc.
- Depreciation or use allowance: for buildings and equipment
- General administration and general expense: accounting, payroll, administrative offices, etc.
- Sponsored project administration: personnel and other costs of offices whose responsibility is the administration of sponsored projects
- Departmental administration expenses: administrative costs at the college and departmental levels

NAF Communication Outlets

The title of each study funded by NAF, the name of the principal investigator, institution, city, and state will be published on our web page, in our newsletter, annual report, social media pages, and wherever NAF feels appropriate.

Each grant application must include a lay summary that will be used to show donors how their contributions to research has enhanced our understanding of ataxia. Lay summaries will be published in NAF communication channels and should not contain confidential information. The other parts of the grant application are considered confidential and will only be released to members of NAF's Medical Research Advisory Board members, the review committee, NAF staff and NAF Board of Directors.