

**AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION
STRATEGICALLY FOCUSED
RESEARCH NETWORK**

**PROJECT PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

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Organization of Center Research Project Application

The development of each Center as a whole will be the responsibility of the Center Director, who will coordinate the research projects and the training program. An applicant for a Center Research Project is responsible for preparing their electronic application and submitting it to their institution's Grants Officer prior to the deadline date.

A complete Center submission is composed of:

- proposed Center Director's application (which includes a summary of the Center's vision, synergy of proposed science, qualifications of key team members, resources/environment, history of collaboration, training program information, and budgets)
- Three center research projects in these areas of science discovery, as mandated by each RFA: basic, clinical, population science disciplines. All will focus on the determined research area or disease.

The AHA should receive **1+n separate electronic components from each Center**, where 1 corresponds to the Center Director application and n=the number of research projects proposed.

General Instructions

This set of instructions should be used by the proposed Principal Investigator of a Strategically Focused Research Project. All applications must be submitted in English.

Before preparing the application, be sure to review the description of the award in the American Heart Association Strategically Focused Research Network Request for Applications.

This electronic research project application is to be prepared for the first phase of peer review. Finalists will be notified regarding phase 2 of review, which includes an in-person presentation to the review group by the proposed Center Director and members of the Center team.

Use of AHA Forms and Electronic Submission

The American Heart Association's application forms, electronic submission process, and pre-peer review online process will be used. The American Heart Association will also conduct the peer review, in accordance with the review criteria stated in the Request for Applications.

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.

PLEASE NOTE: [Grants@Heart](#) will time out after 30 minutes of inactivity.

Requirements

While the application is completed via [Grants@Heart](#), there will be a number of forms that require preparation outside of the system, and then uploading via PDF document into the application. [Grants@Heart](#) does not accept document uploads in Microsoft Word format.

For all text in documents which you create the following are AHA **requirements**:

- Only Portable Document Format (PDF) files will be accepted
- Files must be single spaced
- No more than 15 characters per inch (cpi) or an average of no more than 15 cpi (cpi includes symbols, punctuation and spaces)
- No less than ¾" margins allowed
- Sixty (60) lines per page are the maximum allowed. (The average number of lines per page using the font and point size below will be approximately 50-55 lines.)
- Arial Font Style, 12 point font size for Windows users; Helvetica Font style, 12 point font size for Macintosh users
- Figures, charts, tables, and figure legends may be smaller in size but must be clear and legible.

It is essential that the text complies exactly with the Association's type specifications and page

limits. Failure to comply may result in administrative withdrawal of the application.

Adherence to font and margin 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.

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.

The complete research project application (text, document uploads, required CV's and Bibliographies, institutional signoff, etc.) must be submitted and completed via Grants@Heart.

For questions regarding this process or for technical assistance, please contact:

General questions	sfrn@heart.org
Technical Assistance	login@heart.org 214-360-6107
Institutional Additions	institutions@heart.org

Application Deadline

The scientific research project application and all its component parts must be submitted electronically via Grants@Heart by **5:00 p.m. Central Time on the deadline.**

The submission site is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Applicants are strongly advised to complete their required electronic submission prior to the deadline date, in case technical difficulties are encountered. Applicants who encounter technical difficulties with the electronic submission must contact the AHA office at the numbers above prior to the deadline (5:00 p.m. Central Time) to resolve the situation. Otherwise, their applications will be rejected.

LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Each Principal Investigator of a proposed Strategically Focused Research Project must also provide to the proposed Center Director a letter of support (2-page maximum) which includes a brief overview of your qualifications and experience in research related to the topic of the network; commitment to collaborating with individuals at your respective Center and those located at other institutions for inclusion in the Center Director's application.

Restrictions and Administrative Withdrawal Policies

No supplementary materials (additional preliminary data, new publications, etc.) will be accepted after the application deadline (with the exception of documentation requested by AHA staff).

Applicants should never contact reviewers regarding their applications since discussion of the scientific content of an application or an attempt 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. Applications will be presented for review as received. Applications may not be modified after electronic submission.

All applications and proposals for AHA funding must be self-contained within specific page limitations. Internet web site addresses (URLs) may not be used within the uploaded documents 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 only place a URL may be used is in the biographical sketch as described in the instructions for that form. *Provide a URL to a full list of your published work as found in a publicly available digital database such as SciENcv or My Bibliography, which are maintained by the US National Library of Medicine.*

Your application may be administratively withdrawn if you do not comply with format requirements (type size/characters per inch, lines per page, and page limitations) listed above.

No modifications may be made to the application after electronic submission.

Timeline

The timeline, from application submission to award activation, can be found on our [website](#).

Application Submission

All components of the scientific research project applications are to be completed/uploaded via [Grants@Heart](#).

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, please wait for the authentication email to gain 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 will 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 fourth failed attempt to log in, the system will lock you out for one hour. If you encounter login issues or need instructions on how to register, please contact our office or visit our [website](#).

Note: You will now be able to use American Heart Association’s new simple sign-on process for accessing Grants@Heart! Beginning June 18, 2016, you can use login credentials you’ve set up for any of the following websites to access Grants@Heart.

- Professional Heart Daily
- Professional Education Center
- Instructor Network
- eBooks.heart.org
- eLearning.heart.org
- Simple Cooking With Heart
- extranet.heart.org
- NFL PLAY 60

If you are having problems signing in, please use “Forgot Password” to reset your account.

Starting an Application

A Project PI cannot start their PROJECT application until the Center Director has started his/her CENTER application and identified you as a Project PI on their center grant. As a Project PI, you will receive an email invitation from Grants@Heart that gives explicit instructions on how to get into your PROJECT application. This invitation is specific to you and your PROJECT application. Do not use another Project PI’s invitation in order to get into the system. Follow instructions in the email to start your PROJECT application.

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.

Check mark the box acknowledging your understanding of the AHA's membership/application fee requirement. You will provide your membership number or credit card information later in the application process. Join or renew online prior to the application deadline to avoid delays in membership validation. If you register by phone, **it may take up to five business days** for your membership to be active in the system.

PLEASE NOTE: Each Center Director and his/her three Research Project PIs must provide their AHA membership number, become a member, or pay the application fee. 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 join or renew their membership via a link in the Grants@Heart application site. Applicants who opt to pay the 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.

Click the "Continue" button.

1. Pre-Submission Questionnaire

The first step in the application process is completing the program questionnaire. The questionnaire is a series of questions to help determine whether you are eligible to apply for the Strategically Focused Research Network. If you have not done so already, please review the Request for Applications for this program.

If eligibility is determined by the answers provided, you will be granted access to complete an application. If you miss any question, you will receive a message that you provided an unacceptable response (or responses) to the questionnaire. You will be given an opportunity to explain your response(s).

PLEASE NOTE: Our staff is monitoring the questionnaires. Someone will be in contact with 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.

2. Dual Submissions

Applicants may see a screen asking him/her if they are completing this application for a dual submission. Select "No" as Center and Project applications are not dual submissions and require separate/distinct documentation.

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 Web site 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 only place a URL may be used is in the biographical sketch as described in the instructions for that form. *Provide a URL to a full list of your published work as found in a publicly available digital database such as SciENcv or My Bibliography, which are maintained by the US National Library of Medicine.*

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 this program can be found on our [website](#). Before submitting the application to the AHA, please double check each section of the application and ensure all required documents have been uploaded. You will not be able to modify or change the application or its content once it is submitted to AHA.

APPLICATION SECTIONS

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.

PLEASE NOTE: It is important to save entries in each section and each tab within the sections or data may be lost.

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.

a. Profile – Current Information

The information displayed in the “Profile –Current Information” tab is from your original Grants@Heart system registration. To update or change this information at any time click on “Profile Manager” at the top of the screen.

b. Other Required Profile Information

Complete all fields in this section.

Country of Citizenship – Select the name of your country of citizenship from the drop-down list. If the country is not on this list, type in the name of the country.

Be very specific as to the **immigration status** you have. If **not** a U.S. citizen but currently in the U.S. with a visa, select the appropriate status from the drop-down list. (U.S. citizens should leave blank.) All non-U.S. citizen applicants must have an acceptable visa status at time of application.

Applicants who have been lawfully admitted for permanent residence, i.e., are in possession of a Permanent Resident Card (formerly known as Alien Registration Card) or other legal verification of such status (such as I-551 stamp in passport), should choose Permanent Resident.

Applicants who have applied for permanent residency should choose Permanent Resident/Pending from the drop-down list. Only applicants who have filed form I-485 with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and who have received authorization to legally remain in the U.S. (having filed an Application for Employment form I-765) should choose Permanent Resident/Pending.

Awardees must meet AHA citizenship criteria throughout the duration of their awards.

Academic Title - enter your anticipated title at time of award activation.

Academic Position - Select anticipated academic position at time of award activation from drop-down list.

Career Stage - review the descriptions of career stage below and select most appropriate current career stage from drop-down list. These descriptions are requested for aggregate program evaluation purposes only.

Career Stage

Gaining Credentials Doctoral candidate PhD, MD, MD/PhD, DO/PhD, or DVM/PhD or equivalent students	Attaining graduate credentials.
Directed Step Postdoctoral fellow PhD, MD/PhD or DO/PhD, MD, DO, DVM or equivalent	Building a career in research.
First Independent Step Instructor or other first academic	Establishing independent status. Acquiring preliminary results as a
Intermediate Level Assistant professor or equivalent Entry not more than 8 years after PhD or subspecialty board eligibility (MD or	Strengthening independent status. Acquiring new knowledge through research.
Recognized Investigator Associate professor or equivalent Professor or equivalent	Acquiring new knowledge through research. Establishing new research direction. Acquiring preliminary results as a basis for developing grant
Research Group Leader Professor or equivalent	Stimulating newly emerging areas of research. Strengthening research.

c. Other Personal Information

While none of the requested information in this tab is required, please help the AHA to gather demographics on our awardees and complete as many fields as are comfortable for you.

d. Institution Information

This tab collects information on the institution where work will be done. This also represents the institution that will be financially responsible for the activities supported by the award. If you would like to use your current institution (the one in your Profile Manager) as the institution where work will be done, check mark the box at the top of the tab.

PLEASE NOTE: You cannot type into the Institution text box. To search for an institution, you must click on the Search button which generates a pop-up box. Enter a minimal amount of information (such as Missouri or Calif) to return the most possible matches, rather than an exact name. Select the correct institution from the list and close the window.

Enter the name of your Department and Division at the institution where work will be done.

e. Professional Time Usage Detail

Information regarding the amount of time you spend in each of these categories is collected in this tab. The total of all areas must equal 100%. If you do not spend time in one of the areas, enter a zero "0."

f. Degree 1

From the drop-down box select the first degree received beginning with a Bachelor's degree. Include the field of study, institution from which you received the degree and the date the degree was conferred. To add doctoral degrees, click on the "Add Another" button **after** you hit the save button in the tab. List all upper degrees earned to date.

2. Project Summary

a. Percent Effort

List the percent effort that you will devote to the research project. There is a 10% minimum percent effort requirement for the Research Projects Principal Investigator.

b. Project Title

Enter the title of your project, not to exceed 120 letters and spaces. Do not use abbreviations unless absolutely necessary.

c. Project Summary

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.

PLEASE NOTE: The project summary section has a character limit of 2,500 which includes spaces. You should not enter special characters and formatting (such as super or subscripts, special characters, Greek symbols, italics, underlining, bolding, etc.) into this field. Only enter text characters in the Project Summary field.

3. Science Classification

Complete this section based upon your proposed research project.

a. Research Classification Type

Select the Research Type that best fits the proposed research project. Indicate whether your research is translational in nature. These classifications are independent of each other and will not affect the peer review of your application.

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.

b. Major Science Classification

Choose BOTH a Major Classification 1 and a Major Classification 2. These choices will ensure that your application filters into the correct Peer Review committee. Then select up to 6 sub-classifications to match your application to the appropriate scientific expert. To view the current science classifications, visit our [website](#).

4. Research Classification

Complete this section by indicating whether your research is closely or broadly CVD and Stroke –related. Locate your research type in either of the boxes and then select the corresponding radio button.

5. Institutional Personnel

Institutional personnel are those associated with the Applicant’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.

a. Current Supervisor

Complete all required fields with information regarding your current, immediate Supervisor.

b. Grants Officer

Grants 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.

c. Fiscal Officer

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 Fiscal Officer as they are responsible for the annual submission of financial reports to the AHA.

If the person you have been instructed to select is not on the list, please confirm that they are registered users with Grants@Heart.

6. Third Party Personnel

The applicant must identify the persons associated with his/her application and their role on the project.

Some third-party roles (such as Department Head) are required by a program and will appear automatically in your online application. Other third-party roles are “optional” and may be added if needed (such as a collaborating investigator or consultant).

Some third parties are required to submit documentation of support. Details on the different types of supporting documentation required from third parties can be found throughout this instruction manual and on our [website](#).

All third parties should complete their supporting documentation and send it to the applicant by email. The applicant will be responsible for uploading all supporting documents into Grants@Heart.

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

a. Department Head

Complete all required fields with information regarding your current Department Head. If work will be done at a different institution from your current institution, please provide information regarding the chair of the department where work will be done.

The Department Head is required to submit a letter of information about the applicant’s academic appointment, career stage, support from the institution, etc. to be uploaded to this section by the Project PI. The format for the letter can be found on our [website](#). There is a 5-page maximum for this letter.

For research project applications being conducted at an institution other than the Center Institution, the Department Head letter should include the above required information along with his/her support of the applicant’s participation in the Center Network.

If the research Project PI is also the Department Head, please fill out this section with your information.

A letter from the Department Head assuring the department’s and the institution’s support of the application along with confirmation that the applicant will devote at least 10% effort towards the project should be uploaded to this section. If the applicant is also the Department Head, the letter should come from the Department Head’s supervisor.

b. Center Director

Complete all required fields with information regarding the Director of the Center. If research project applicant is also Center Director, enter your information again here.

A supporting document upload is not required from the Center Director on the research project application.

c. Add More Third-Party Roles

Use this area to add any other **key project team members not previously listed**. The following is a list of potential key team members:

- **Collaborating Investigator(s)**

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.

PLEASE NOTE: The concept of Co-Principal Investigators is not recognized. The American Heart Association recognizes only one Principal Investigator for this program. The second investigator may be listed as a Collaborating Investigator.

If a "Collaborating Investigator" is identified, their biographical sketch and a letter of support from him/her will need to be uploaded to this section by the Project PI. The letter should provide a brief overview of their qualifications, experience and commitment relative to the research project. There is a 5-page maximum for the biographical sketch and a 2-page maximum for the letter of support.

- **Consultant(s)**

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. He/she 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.

If a "Consultant" is identified, their biographical sketch and a letter of support from the consultant will need to be uploaded to this section by the Project PI. The letter should provide a brief overview of their qualifications, experience and commitment relative to the research project. There is a 5-page maximum for the biographical sketch and a 2-page maximum for the letter of support.

- **Other Professional**

Other Professional is an individual who may hold a doctoral, masters or baccalaureate degree or its equivalent and who is considered a professional. Examples of persons included in this category are analysts, biostatisticians, computer programmers, veterinarians, nurse coordinators, epidemiologists, etc.

If an "Other Professional" is identified, their biographical sketch and a letter of support from the professional will need to be uploaded to this section by the Project PI. The letter should provide a brief overview of their qualifications, experience and commitment relative to the work they will perform for the research project. There is a 5-page maximum for the biographical sketch and a 2-page maximum for the letter support.

7. Lay Research Form

Please complete the form in its entirety. The lay research form will be used by people who do not have scientific or medical backgrounds. Please be as clear as possible in your descriptions. Imagine you are describing this research to an elementary school student and use language and terminology accordingly within the Lay Research Summary form.

a. Research Categories

Please select up to 5 research categories that relate to your research.

b. Lay Research

Enter information in all 3 boxes. Please be clear and concise with the information you provide. A sample is provided as to how a correct lay research summary should be prepared.

PLEASE NOTE: Each box of the Lay Research section allows for **only 800** characters including spaces.

c. PI Permission

This section deals with AHA's ability to raise donor dollars to help support our research efforts. AHA does not share intellectual property.

8. Budget

The entire Center Budget is tied to the Director's application. The total amount requested, *including* 10% indirect costs, may not exceed \$3,709,200 for the 4-year award period. The Research Project budget cannot be entered on the Project PI application until the Center Director has allocated an amount to the Project PI via the CENTER application.

a. Center Network Budget Details:

The dollar amount displayed is the amount allocated to you by the Center Director. This amount cannot be changed from the Research Project PI application. All research project budget detail numbers added together cannot exceed this amount. If the amount is \$0 this means the Director has not allocated funds to the PROJECT application at this time and you cannot enter your budget details.

b. Budget Details:

Enter the budget details for the research project. Each of the Project PIs will enter their budget details on their own application. The total budget details entered cannot exceed the budget allocated for the Center in the Budget Allocation section. There is no salary cap for the Research Project PI, but must be commensurate with the percent effort devoted to the project. All Project PIs, Center Directors, Training Directors and fellows will be required to attend an Annual Network meeting each year. Travel to this meeting must be covered with grant funding.

Below is an **example** of a Research Project PI Budget Detail section

Details	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Salary / Fringe	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Project Support	\$184,000	\$184,000	\$184,000	\$184,000
Travel	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Indirect Costs	\$23,700	\$23,700	\$23,700	\$23,700
Sub Total	\$260,700	\$260,700	\$260,700	\$260,700
Total	\$1,042,800			

PLEASE NOTE: If a Center is funded, a detailed budget will be required at award activation time which will require institutional Grants Officer approval and should be in accordance with Association Guidelines. This detailed budget will be presented to the Oversight Advisory Committee for final approval.

9. 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.

If you do not have funds available to you, please select “no.” If you have funds available, please select “yes.” Go to our [website](#) to view our policies and standards on “Alternative” and “Overlapping” designations.

If you selected “yes,” 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.

For “**Total Award**”, enter award dollars, stipend/project dollars, and direct costs for all years of award excluding indirect costs. For the “**Total Amount Available to Applicant**”, enter all award dollars available to the applicant, stipend/project dollars, direct costs for all years of award excluding indirect costs. In some instances, this amount may be the same as the Total Award Amount. For “**Annual Amount Available to Applicant**,” enter all direct costs minus salary and fringe of principal investigator, excluding indirect costs. If annual amount is staggered, give an average of the annual amount.

Click "Save." If you have further research support to list, you may "Add Another" by clicking on the buttons at the bottom of the page.

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.

PLEASE NOTE: Research funds will not be awarded to supplement or duplicate any work which is being supported by other funding agencies.

10. Research Subjects/Assurances

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

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. 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 of three months following the original activation date to submit the IRB human subject's 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.

d. 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.

e. Human Fetal Tissue

The AHA does not fund scientific research that involves the use of human fetal tissue.

f. 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 are using 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, go to 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.

Click the "Save" button and then continue.

11. Science/Evaluation Information

Information regarding the document uploads for the Science/Evaluation Information section of the application can be found in the "Supporting Documents" section of our [website](#).

To upload a document, click the "Browse" button, find the document on your computer and then click "open." Once you see the file name in the browse box, click the "Save" button in the section.

If at any time, prior to submission, you need to update the uploaded document, click on the “Browse” button in the section in question, find the updated version of the document on your computer and click “open.” Once you see the updated file name in the “Browse” box, click the “Save” button and the new document will replace the old one.

a. Applicant/PI Biographical Sketch (5-page maximum)

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. An NIH biosketch does not have to adhere to the font and margin requirements listed earlier in this document.

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 five pages allowed).

If you don't have an NIH Biographical Sketch, create your biographical sketch using the outline on our [website](#).

In the biographical sketch, please do not 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.

Do not exceed five (5) pages for the entire AHA Biographical Sketch (including bibliography). A document that exceeds the page limit will be rejected by Grants@Heart.

b. Budget Justification (2-page maximum)

A Budget Justification form is provided on our [website](#). Provide information on the three required sections:

- Personnel - list any personnel who will receive funds from the research project. Provide name, degree(s), percent of time to be devoted to project and a description of their role in the research project. All personnel receiving salary or consultant fees from the project should be listed, such as the Consultants, Collaborating Investigators and Other Professionals.
- Computer/equipment – the AHA does not in general favor project support requests wherein the budget is devoted primarily to equipment purchase. However, such costs may be allowed if the equipment is essential to the conduct of the proposed research, well justified, and approved by the peer review committee and Research Committee. Any computer equipment cost equal to or greater than \$5,000 should be listed, with a brief justification. Total annual equipment costs (exclusive of computer equipment above) equal to or greater than \$10,000 should be listed, with a brief justification.
- Travel Costs – travel to required Oversight Advisory Committee or Center Network meetings does not need to be included in the budget justification. Anticipated travel expenditures for the Project PI and project personnel outside of these required meetings should be justified here. The final approval for any excess travel funds will be provided by the Peer Review Committee and Oversight Advisory Committee if the application is funded.

PLEASE NOTE: If a Center is funded, a detailed budget will be required at award activation time which will require institutional Grants Officer approval and should be in accordance with Association Guidelines. This detailed budget will be presented to the Oversight Advisory Committee for final approval.

c. Research Project Environment (2-page maximum)

Describe relevant institutional resources and environment, including unique facilities and affiliated institutions or geographic relationships.

The AHA has a template form that outlines the information that should be included in this document. You may access the template by clicking on the question mark in this section of the application or from our [website](#).

You are allowed to use information from a current Resources form prepared for an NIH application. You may type text into the AHA's form or you can copy and paste the information from the NIH Resources form into the Research Project Environment form.

d. Publications (reprints – no page limit)

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. These publications may be Published or In Press (meaning that it was accepted for publication, but the publication has yet to be distributed).

e. Research Plan (17-page maximum)

Before beginning the Research Plan, review the Request for Applications noting especially the science requirements and expertise qualifications along with any restrictions for the program. The Research Plan should address all of the peer review criteria.

No more than 17 consecutively numbered pages (including any diagrams, figures, tables, graphics/images, etc.) will be accepted. Applications with more than 17 consecutive pages in the Proposed Research Plan and/or not adhering to format requirements previously mentioned in this document (characters per inch, etc.) may be administratively withdrawn.

Type the proposed research plan single-spaced, specifically following the outline given below. All items should be addressed. Please indicate N/A or None if not applicable to this application.

Suggested lengths below are guidelines only but must not exceed 17 pages. The topics below must be addressed.

- Specific Aims (2 pages)

Provide a clear, concise summary of the aims of the work proposed. State the hypothesis to be tested.

- Background and Significance (3-4 pages)

Sketch the background leading to this application. Summarize important results outlined by others in the same field, critically evaluating existing knowledge.

Identify gaps which this project is intended to fill. If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge or clinical practice be advanced?

State concisely the importance and relevance of the research to the topic of the network. How will the proposed studies contribute this science area?

- Previous Work of Applicant (2-3 pages)

Concisely describe previous work related to the proposed research by the applicant that will help to establish the experience and competence of the investigator to pursue the proposed project. If applicable, include pilot studies showing the work is feasible.

- Research Design and Methods (7-8 pages)

Description of proposed tests, methods or procedures should be explicit, sufficiently detailed, and well defined to allow adequate evaluation of the approach to the problem. Describe any new methodology and its advantage over existing methodologies.

Clearly describe overall design of the study, with careful consideration to statistical aspects of the approach, the adequacy of controls, and number of observations, as well as how results will be analyzed. Include any collaborative arrangements that have been made.

Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and alternative approaches to achieve the aims.

Note: Except as provided below, if a 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. Be sure to address this topic.

- Ethical aspects of the proposed research (1/4 - 1/2 page)

Describe any special consideration you have given to all ethical issues involved in your proposed investigations (biohazards or human subjects, etc.), identifying risks and management. Be sure to address this topic. If using animals, ensure that you have uploaded the Vertebrate Animal Subjects form as part of your application. See Research Subjects/Assurances section above.

f. Literature Cited (no page limit)

List all literature citations for your Research Plan. 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
- Name of the book or journal
- Volume number
- Page numbers
- Year of publication

12. Supporting Documentation

This section shows all documentation prepared by Third Parties and uploaded by the Applicant. The documents will appear as hyperlinks for all parties.

Any missing items will be reflected with a yellow check mark. The Applicant can upload supporting documentation by navigating to the Third-Party Personnel section of the application and clicking the "Upload" button in each party's respective tab. If the supporting documentation has not been uploaded, you will see a message to that effect.

13. Membership/Application Fee

Applicants are required to be either an American Heart Association Professional Member at any level or pay a \$100 per application submission fee. Until an applicant pays the fee or joins/renews AHA Professional Membership, she/he will not be able to submit the application to the Grants Officer.

a. Membership

Applicants may join or renew their membership via a link in the Grants@Heart application. Utilizing this link allows you to bypass the wait time and continue applying right away. Join or renew online to avoid delays

in membership validation. If you register by phone, **it may take up to five business days** for your membership to be active in the system.

If you are an AHA Professional member at any level, enter your membership number. Your last name on your 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.

To find out more about membership levels and benefits, please visit our [website](#).

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.

b. Application Fee

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 and pay the fee prior to submitting to your Grants Officer. Your payment should be processed immediately and Grants@Heart will allow you to proceed with the submission of your application to your Grants Officer.

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

14. Submit to Grants Officer

Upon completion of all the application sections, the applicant/investigator should check all sections and uploads for accuracy. If an incorrect document has been uploaded to any section of the application, simply repeat the upload process and select the correct document. Be sure to save all changes.

While the Center Director is responsible for the coordination of the total Center application, each research project Principal Investigator is responsible for submitting their research project application to their respective Grants Officer prior to the deadline.

It is important to note that the Center Director’s application cannot be submitted to AHA until **ALL** Research Project PIs have submitted their respective applications to their Grants Officers. **The Grants Officer must approve each Research Project application separately. Each application should be considered its own entity.** It may be beneficial for the Center Director and his/her institution to set an internal deadline prior to AHA’s deadline for all research project applications to submit to their Grants Officers.

When you have confirmed that your application is ready for submission, select “Submit to Grants Officer” in the left navigation menu. If there are missing sections in the application, they will be highlighted with Yellow check marks in the left navigation. You must correct any section with a yellow check mark 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!**

APPLICATION SUBMISSION TO AHA BY GRANTS OFFICER

Approving the application completes the submission process. **The Grants Officer is responsible for submitting the application to AHA.** 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](#).

First-time Grants Officer/Fiscal Officer should register with [Grants@Heart](#) by clicking the link labeled, “Grants/Fiscal Officer” under the log in section for first time users.

The applicant and institution are responsible for compliance with all American Heart Association research award [policies and guidelines](#) for the duration of any awards they may receive.

If a U.S. institution, the institution assures that it is in compliance with current guidelines of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regarding recombinant DNA and Financial Conflict of Interest by the signature of the institutional official.