



## **CALL FOR APPLICATIONS**

### **POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP AWARDS**

*Join the Next Generation of Leaders in Diabetes Research*

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American Diabetes Association  
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[diabetes.org](http://diabetes.org)

## Postdoctoral Fellowship Awards: Purpose and Scope

**Background:** Diabetes is a growing epidemic that affects millions of people in the United States and across the globe. It is a complex disease that requires innovative and interdisciplinary research to better understand its underlying mechanisms, develop new treatments, and prevent its onset. Additionally, mental health plays a critical role in diabetes, and addressing these issues is crucial for improving patient outcomes. There is a pressing need for more talented, early-stage investigators to join the field of diabetes research and tackle these challenges. Postdoctoral training is an essential step in launching a successful research career and making significant contributions to the field.

**Goal:** The American Diabetes Association (ADA) is committed to nurturing the next generation of leaders in diabetes research. We are pleased to announce the availability of postdoctoral fellowships to support outstanding researchers in their pursuit of innovative and impactful research projects. Our goal is to provide exceptional training opportunities that will empower fellows to make significant advances in diabetes research and contribute meaningfully to the ADA's mission of improving the lives of people with all types of diabetes.

As part of our commitment to early-career scientists, we are also pleased to share several new enhancements to our postdoctoral support:

- **Increased Postdoctoral Salaries:** Fellowship awardees will now receive a higher stipend to better support their training and well-being.
- **Publication Charges Waived for ADA Journals:** ADA journals will waive publication fees for articles where the fellowship awardee is the first author.
- **ADA Professional Membership Discount:** All ADA postdoctoral fellows will receive a 15% discount on ADA professional membership, offering access to valuable resources, networking opportunities, and professional development tools.

**Scope:** This call for postdoctoral fellowship applications is open to all topics in diabetes research spanning basic, clinical, and translational research, epidemiology, health services research, and public health. We especially welcome applications that align with ADA's previous and current RFA topic areas such as nutrition and lifestyle, precision medicine, women's health, mental and behavioral health, youth onset T2D, aging, and primary care.

### Funding Mechanism

Candidates for Postdoctoral Fellowship awards are qualified, promising investigators at a relatively early stage of their career, seeking to make significant contributions in the field of diabetes research. Applicants are required to work under the guidance of a **Sponsoring Mentor** who is committed to providing a supportive training environment and professional development opportunities. While applicants must apply for this award under the supervision of a **Sponsoring Mentor**, it is expected that the proposed research project will be independently developed and pursued by the applicant.

For Postdoctoral Fellowship awards, applicants may request up to three (3) years of funding support. This support includes a salary for the Postdoctoral Fellow plus \$7,000 for fringe benefit costs and a \$8,000 training allowance for each year of the award. The proposed project budget should not exceed **\$99,088 USD** per year for a maximum total budget up to **\$297,264 USD** over three (3) years.

*The following budget stipulations apply to Postdoctoral Fellowship Awards:*

### **Salary for Principal Investigator**

Salary support is based on the number of full years of relevant postdoctoral experience as of the application submission date. Relevant experience may include research, teaching assistantships, internships, residencies, clinical duties, or other health-related work beyond the qualifying doctoral degree.

The fellowship term is 12 months per award year. Once the appropriate salary level is set, the Principal Investigator will be paid at that rate for the full year; mid-year adjustments are not allowed. Salary will advance to the next level in subsequent years. Only one individual may be designated as Principal Investigator; co-Principal Investigators or Key Personnel are not permitted for Postdoctoral Fellowship awards

The Principal Investigator's ADA-supported salary may be supplemented by the **Sponsoring Mentor** and/or **Sponsoring Institution**. However, the application budget must reflect only the funds requested from the ADA and exclude any supplemental sources

<b>Years of Postdoctoral Experience</b>	<b>2025 Stipend Amount for Awards</b>
0	\$71,008
1	\$73,428
2	\$74,884
3	\$75,356
4	\$76,492
5	\$78,964
6	\$81,532
7 of More	\$84,088

### **Percent Effort**

The Principal Investigator must agree to devote **at least 75%** of their total time and overall effort towards research.

### **Training Allowance**

The **\$8,000 annual training allowance** may be used to support the educational and scientific expenses of the Fellow. Examples of expenses eligible to be included in this category are as follows:

- Travel to Diabetes Related Scientific Meetings.
- Computer (*one-time purchase*)
- Books (*limit of \$500 per year*)
- Publication Costs (*page charges, reprint costs*)
- Equipment
- Training Courses & Workshops
- Reagents
- Lab Supplies

- American Diabetes Association Professional Membership Annual Fees

### **Fringe Benefit Allowance**

The **\$7,000 annual fringe benefit allowance** may be used to defray the fellow's health insurance costs and other fringe benefits. This allowance may not be used for institutional overhead, postdoctoral registration fees, or postdoctoral fellowship taxes.

### **Indirect Costs**

Indirect costs are not permitted for Postdoctoral Fellowship awards.

### **Prohibited Expenses**

The following items cannot be purchased with award funds:

- Rent for Office or Lab Space
- Other Computer Hardware or Smart Devices (*e.g., printer, iPad, smart phone*)
- Telephone or Internet Service
- Non-Technical Support (*i.e. custodial, or administrative*)
- Relocation Costs
- Memberships and/or Subscriptions (*Please note that this does not include the ADA's annual Professional Membership fees*)
- IRB or IACUC Administration Fees
- Consultant Fees
- Visa or Legal Fees
- Office Supplies
- Liability Insurance

This is not a complete list of unallowable costs. Any questions about whether a particular item or service may be purchased with direct costs should be referred to the ADA's Research Programs team. ADA reserves the right to refuse to pay for items or services. Unsanctioned purchases will be deducted from the recipient's grant.

### **Eligibility Stipulations**

Applicants must hold a MD, PhD, DMD, DO, PharmD, DVM or an equivalent health or science related degree from an accredited institution and must not be simultaneously serving in an internship or residency.

Applicant fellowship positions must be at university-affiliated institutions or other non-profit research institutions within the United States and U.S. possessions.

There are no citizen requirements for this award. However, individuals must have permission to work within the United States., either as U.S. citizens or permanent residents, or with appropriate work visas and permits. Institutional confirmation of permission to work within the United States will be required at the time of application submission.

To ensure continued excellence among applicants and awardees, ADA welcomes applications from all qualified individuals and strongly encourages applications from persons with diverse backgrounds, including groups that are underrepresented in biomedical research.

### **Fellowship Appointment**

Applications from investigators with more than four (4) years of research training beyond conferral of their terminal degree, at the time of submission, are not eligible to apply. However, applicants who have taken temporary leave from their career development path (eg. parental leave, caring for a sick family member, personal health issues), or faced training delays due to circumstances beyond their control (eg. natural disasters or public health emergencies); are encouraged to contact ADA Research Programs staff to discuss eligibility before submitting their application.

Applicants must hold a full-time postdoctoral fellowship position or the equivalent at a university, university-affiliated research institution or other non-profit research institution in the United States. If the appointment is less than full-time, it must be noted on the budget page. Applications from investigators with part-time appointments will be considered on a case-by-case basis

Applicants from non-university research institutions must provide a letter from the proper institutional official explaining how the position of the applicant compares to a postdoctoral position in a traditional academic institution. Any ambiguity about the applicant's position can negatively impact the application.

If funded, the Principal Investigator must remain at the same institution for the duration of the award and may not transfer without their current mentor. The ADA Postdoctoral Fellowship may not be held concurrently with other postdoctoral funding or during an internship or residency. However, prior NIH or foundation postdoctoral funding is permitted if completed before award activation.

### **Institutional Approval**

The Principal Investigator must have their institution's approval prior to electronically submitting an application in SmartSimple Grantmaking, ADA's grant management system. The Principal Investigator must confirm that the **Sponsoring Institution** is aware of the grant application and has acknowledged its intent to fully support the award. Additionally, the Principal Investigator must submit the completed application to a Research Officer at their institution prior to full submission to the ADA. The Research Officer is responsible for completing the submission to the ADA in SmartSimple, ADA's grant management system. Any application related files or other materials submitted outside of SmartSimple will not be accepted.

## Sponsoring Mentor

Postdoctoral Fellows must be sponsored by an investigator who is affiliated full-time with an accredited institution and who agrees to supervise their fellowship training, professional development, and career advancement. The **Sponsoring Mentor** does not necessarily need to have a background in diabetes, but the research project must be diabetes related.

### Mentor Training Experience

The **Sponsoring Mentor** must provide a listing of prior mentorship experience by listing the names of all fellows currently in training and those previously trained **within** the last five (5) years. The following information is required to be included for each trained fellow:

- Fellow Name
- Training Period (start and end dates of training period)
- Fellow's Highest Degree and Year Received
- Institution (institution where the fellowship occurred)
- Fellow's Current Position/Source of Support

### Mentor Letter of Support:

The **Sponsoring Mentor** must provide a letter outlining their commitment to the applicant's training and development. The letter must be included in the '*Additional Attachments*' section within the online application. The mentor letter of support should be addressed as '*Dear Review Committee*' and must specifically address the following points:

- Describe prior mentoring experience.
- Provide assurance of an academic commitment to the applicant and to the applicant's research proposal. Confirm commitment of both adequate space and facilities for the conduct of the proposed work.
- Provide assurance that the proposed project was developed primarily by the Fellow and will provide a distinct research program that the Fellow can independently pursue at the completion of their training.
- Describe the applicant's qualifications for the proposed research.
- Describe the applicant's potential for a successful independent career in diabetes research.
- Outline plans for the longer-term development and training of the applicant.

## Letters of Recommendation

In addition to the Sponsoring Mentor's letter of support, three (3) **Letters of Recommendation** assessing the scientific abilities and potential of the applicant must be submitted. The recommendation letters must be uploaded and submitted directly through SmartSimple by the referee. Please note that the recommendation letters are confidential and will not be released to the applicant.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all three (3) recommenders have submitted their letters prior to the submission deadline. Therefore, it is strongly suggested that all the recommendation letters are uploaded to the application **at least two (2) weeks prior** to the submission deadline to avoid any potential issues or delays. ADA will not accept letters separately after the application deadline.

SmartSimple will prevent submission of any application without all three (3) recommendation letters

uploaded and submitted by the application deadline. Detailed instructions on how to upload and submit the **Letters of Recommendation** into SmartSimple can be found within the *Postdoctoral Fellowship: Application Materials* section of the ADA website.

Letters should be addressed as '*Dear Review Committee*' and must specifically address the following points:

- Applicant's potential to make significant contributions to diabetes research.
- Applicant's ability to innovate and collaborate.
- Assessment of the applicant's intellectual capacity and research potential in comparison with others at an equivalent career stage (*percentile ranking i.e. in the top 10% of previous trainees*)

*Letters of Recommendation must be provided from each of the following individuals:*

**PhD Advisor or Medical Training Advisor (x1 Letter):** The applicant's PhD or medical training advisor must provide a **Letter of Recommendation**. If the applicant cannot provide a reference from their direct graduate or medical training advisor, it must come from another individual specifically involved in the applicant's research or medical training at the graduate level. The individual providing the reference must explain their relationship with applicant (e.g. thesis committee member, or investigator other than advisor that was a close collaborator/co-author, or that worked closely with the applicant during their graduate training).

**Current or Past Collaborators (x2 Letters):** The two (2) remaining **Letters of Recommendation** must be submitted from qualified individuals, other than the Sponsoring Mentor, who can evaluate the applicant's qualifications for the proposed research and assess the applicant's potential for a successful independent career in diabetes research.

## **Review Criteria**

Scientific excellence is the primary benchmark to be evaluated for all Postdoctoral Fellowship applications. The proposed research serves as a reflection of the individual's capacity for innovation, creativity, and collaboration.

The challenges of comparing different research approaches and investigators across a broad spectrum are met by assembling an external review panel, which is a committee of scientific experts in diabetes research and other fields who personify the core elements needed for exceptional science: rigorous thought processes, keen intellect, and the capacity for innovation, creativity, and productivity.

Applications will be subjected to confidential scientific review and will be evaluated on the following:

### *Principal Investigator:*

- Previous experience and academic record
- Proven ability for creativity, collaboration, and innovation
- Institutional commitment including the quality of the mentor, training program, and suitability of the research environment.

#### *Research Strategy:*

- Innovation and creativity
- Potential impact for understanding and treatment of diabetes.
- Clarity of thought and approach
- Quality and significance of the research proposal

Please note that not all applications will undergo full review; some may be subject to competitive triage. Applicants will be notified by email in September if their application has been triaged.

### **Application Submission**

The Postdoctoral Fellowship application submission deadline is **Wednesday July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, at 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time**. The application must be routed through and approved by the usual administrative channels of the **Sponsoring Institution**.

Applications must be submitted through SmartSimple, the ADA's grant management system, available through our website. The applicant will receive a confirmation email through the online application system to confirm the successful submission of their proposal. Any application related files or other materials submitted outside of SmartSimple will not be accepted.

### **Postdoctoral Fellowship Award SmartSimple Application Link:**

[https://diabetes.us-2.smartsimple.com/s\\_Login.jsp](https://diabetes.us-2.smartsimple.com/s_Login.jsp)

### **Projected Funding Timeline**

Action Item	Deadline
Postdoctoral Fellowship RFA Launch	Monday May 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2025
Full Proposal Submission Deadline	Wednesday July 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2025
Funding Decision Notification	Monday November 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2025
Earliest Award Start Date	Thursday January 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2026

Applicants will be notified of their application's final funding decision only following the conclusion of the review process. Notification of the funding decision will be sent directly to the applicant via email. If the applicant does not receive a confirmation email within the indicated time frame, please contact [grantquestions@diabetes.org](mailto:grantquestions@diabetes.org).

### **SmartSimple**

In May 2025, the ADA launched their new grant management system, SmartSimple. If you have previously applied for a grant or participated in a peer review, you may already have an account in our system. To access your SmartSimple account, please enter your email address as the username and click 'Forgot Password'. If you do not have an account, please follow the instructions in the SmartSimple Pre-Award FAQ document to create a new one. This document can be found within the *Postdoctoral Fellowship: Application Materials* section of the ADA website.

### **Status Changes**



The applicant must notify ADA in writing regarding any change in application status after submission. Status changes include the following:

**Contact Information Change:** Send an email to [grantquestions@diabetes.org](mailto:grantquestions@diabetes.org) and specify the lead applicant's name, institution, email address used, application type, application title, and contact information changes.

**Application Withdrawal:** To withdraw a pending application, the applicant must complete and submit a *Grant Application Withdrawal Form*. This form can be found within the *Postdoctoral Fellowship: Application Materials* section of the ADA website.