



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP AWARDS

Join the Next Generation of Leaders in Diabetes Research

American Diabetes Association
2451 Crystal Drive
Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22202
1-800-DIABETES (800-342-2383)
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 support exceptional training opportunities that will enable fellows to make significant advances in diabetes research and contribute to the ADA's mission of improving the lives of people with all types of diabetes.

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 welcome applications that align with ADA's previous RFA topic areas such as nutrition and lifestyle, precision medicine, women's health, mental and behavioral health, and youth onset in T2D.

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.

The following budget stipulations apply to Postdoctoral Fellowship Awards:

Salary for Principal Investigator

The Principal Investigator's annual salary provided by the ADA award may be separately supplemented with funding provided by the **Sponsoring Mentor** and/or **Sponsoring Institution**. However, the application budget should only reflect the fellowship costs being requested from the ADA and not include any supplemental funding sources.

Percent Effort

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

Training Allowance

The **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 **annual fringe benefit allowance** may be used to defray the fellows 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 assure continued excellence and diversity among applicants and awardees, ADA welcomes applications from all qualified individuals and strongly encourages applications from persons with diverse backgrounds, including minority groups that are underrepresented in biomedical research.

Fellowship Appointment

Applications from investigators with more than six (6) years of research training beyond conferral of their terminal degree are discouraged. However, applicants who have taken temporary leave from their career development path (i.e. parenting of a child, childbirth, long-term care of a parent/spouse/child/dependent, personal health issues), or experienced a delay in their training due to COVID shutdowns; are encouraged to contact ADA Research Programs staff regarding their eligibility ahead of their application submission. ADA aims to be flexible and adjust these eligibility timeframes, if necessary and appropriate.

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 an appointment is less than full-time, this must be noted on the budget page. Applications from investigators with less than a full-time appointment 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 are prohibited from transferring to a new institution without their current mentor. Individuals may not hold an American Diabetes Association Postdoctoral Fellowship Award concurrent with other postdoctoral funding; and must not be simultaneously serving an internship or residency. However, they may have completed previous NIH or other foundation/non-profit postdoctoral funding at the time of 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 attest that the application has been routed through and approved by the usual administrative channels of the **Sponsoring Institution**.

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 *Body of the Application* pdf file within the online application. Letter 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 Blackbaud 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 be advised that not all applications will receive a full review, and some may be subjected to a competitive triage. In September, investigators will be notified, via email, if their application has been triaged.

Application Submission

The Postdoctoral Fellowship application submission deadline is **Wednesday July 23rd, 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.

Projected Funding Timeline

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

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 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.