

ALF 2025 POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP AWARD

LETTER OF INTENT (LOI) DEADLINE: June 27, 2025

APPLICATION DEADLINE: July 25, 2025

AWARD PERIOD: December 1, 2025 – November 30, 2026

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Award is to support the development of promising research trainees and their basic or translational research on liver biology and disease. The Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Award encourages the career development of individuals with research potential who are in the post-doctoral phase of their career and require additional research training and experience. The award provides a supplementary stipend directly to trainees, with the goal of supporting them with living expenses and allowing them to focus on their liver research and their transition to a career in independent research.

Postdoctoral trainees who hold MD, PhD or MD/PhD degrees and are training in liver research are encouraged to apply. The award will supplement federal or non-federal fellowship stipends or other types of salary support. This award supports projects in basic or translational research. Clinical research projects are currently not eligible for this award.

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP AWARD AT-A-GLANCE

Career Level: Postdoctoral Trainees

Award Type: Supplementary Stipend

Research Type: Basic or Translational Research

Funding amount: \$25,000 for 1 year

Letter of Intent Deadline: June 27, 2025

Application Deadline: July 25, 2025

ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible for a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Award, the applicant must:

- 1) Be sponsored by a public or private non-profit institution accredited in the United States and engaged in health care and health-related research.
- 2) Hold an MD and/or PhD (or equivalent degree) by the start date of this award.
- 3) Be a postdoctoral or clinical research fellow who has completed their most recent doctoral degree or medical residency within the past five (5) years at the start of the award.
 - a) ALF is sensitive to personal matters that impact career trajectories. An appropriately documented leave of absence (e.g, parental leave, medical leave, long-term care of a parent/spouse/child/dependent) will not be counted toward the above five-year eligibility criteria. Applicants in this situation must reach out to ALF staff at least three weeks before the application deadline to ask for an exemption.
 - b) Applicants who are outside of the eligibility time frame because of other exceptional circumstances may also request to be considered for an exemption.
 - c) Applicants requesting an exemption must reach out to ALF staff via email (research@liverfoundation.org) at least three weeks before the application deadline to ask

for an exemption. Exemptions will be provided on a case-by-case basis and must be included in the application package if granted.

- 4) Be the recipient of a primary source of federal or non-federal postdoctoral fellowship stipends or other types of salary support (eg, percent effort on mentor's grant).
- 5) Be sponsored by a research mentor.
- 6) Be able to guarantee at least 50% protected research time for the duration of the award.
- 7) Not apply for more than one award offered by the American Liver Foundation.

ALF supports research from investigators of all backgrounds. Applicants from groups underrepresented in the biomedical research workforce are encouraged to apply, including, but not limited to, individuals from racial and ethnic groups underrepresented in health-related sciences, individuals with disabilities, and individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.

AWARD DETAILS

An award of \$25,000 will be provided over one year as a supplement to federal or non-federal postdoctoral fellowship stipends or other types of salary support. Funding is provided as a stipend directly to the applicant, not the institution. The stipend is intended to support recipients with living expenses, not to support direct expenses for the research project or institution's indirect costs. It is expected that funds will be available to the recipient in order to carry out the proposed research and cover all expenses necessary for the successful completion of the project.

Award terms:

- Recipients must acknowledge the award in all publications (abstracts, manuscripts, or other documents) resulting from research performed during the tenure of this award. A copy of the publication should be provided to ALF.
- Awards cannot be transferred to another institution without prior written approval from the American Liver Foundation.
- Recipients are directly responsible to the sponsoring institution.
- A maximum of one award will be made per mentor.
- The American Liver Foundation must be notified immediately if the applicant receives another research award during the application process or during the award period.
- Award recipients agree that their photograph and a brief summary of their research project will be featured in a press release and posted on the American Liver Foundation website and social media channels.

RESEARCH PROJECT SCOPE

Candidates can propose basic or translational research projects on liver biology, liver disease(s), or any other topic that will advance the liver research field. Clinical research projects are currently not eligible for this award.

The proposed research project does not have to be a new area of research and can be part of research projects that the candidate is already working on. **The project scope should allow the proposed research to be successfully completed within one year**, which is the duration of the award period. However, because the award is provided as a stipend supporting the recipient rather than research expenses, the proposed project does not need to be feasible within a \$25,000 budget.

LETTER OF INTENT (LOI)

A Letter of Intent (LOI) **must** be submitted to apply for a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Award. The LOI purpose is to allow ALF staff to estimate the number of, and plan for the review of, submitted applications.

The Letter of Intent must be prepared using the fillable LOI PDF template form provided by ALF. Download the [LOI template form](#) and submit the completed form ***via email*** no later than **June 27, 2025**, to:

Helene Jordan, PhD
American Liver Foundation
National Senior Director, Research Program Management
research@liverfoundation.org

The LOI template can also be downloaded from the Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Award [webpage](#). Please contact research@liverfoundation.org if you need assistance.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Formatting Instructions

- 1) Download the [Application Form](#) and [Application Guidelines](#) (they can also be downloaded from the Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Award [webpage](#)).
- 2) Complete the Application Form by typing responses in the fillable pdf document, obtain requested signatures, and prepare all required documents as indicated below.
- 3) Use at least half-inch margins. Do not use lettering smaller than 10-point.
- 4) Be sure to adhere to page limits and complete all sections as indicated in these guidelines. Applications that do not meet the requirements, in content or format, will not be reviewed.
- 5) **Assemble the Application Package in the order listed in the Required Documents section** below.
- 6) The completed Application Form and all required documents must be combined into and submitted as one PDF document. This document is your **Application Package**. Name the PDF as follows: Last name_First name_Postdoc. Your single PDF file must be **no larger than 10MB** (megabytes)

Required Documents

Assemble the required documents **in the order below**:

- 1) **Application Form:**
 - a) **Title Page** – All fields must be completed.
 - b) **Applicant Information and Required Signatures** – All fields must be completed. Indicate N/A if a field does not apply. All required signatures must be provided by the appropriate individuals. Signatures may be digital, electronic, or “in ink.”
 - c) **Applicant Demographic Information** – Complete all fields as appropriate. The provided information is solely for ALF internal purposes. It will be treated as confidential and will not be shared with reviewers.
 - d) **Lay Summary and Abstract** – Provide a lay summary of your research along with your project’s scientific abstract. The lay summary and scientific abstract must adhere to character limits and fit in the space imparted. Please contact research@liverfoundation.org if you need assistance.
 - e) **Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Animal Experimentation** – All human and animal studies require IRB and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval, respectively. Verification of IRB or IACUC approval must be provided prior to the award being granted. If IRB or IACUC approval is required but documentation is not included, please state why.
- 2) **Exemption** (if applicable) – Include the exemption letter provided by ALF if an exemption was granted (see Eligibility section for details).

- 3) **Biosketch** – Provide biographical sketches for the applicant and mentor using the [current NIH biosketch format](#). **Limit five pages each.**
- 4) **Other Support**
 - a) Provide a list of current funding/stipends **for the applicant** (no specific format requested).
 - b) Provide a list of all other active and pending institutional, federal and non-federal support using the NIH [“Other Support” form for the mentor](#) (see the NIH [“Other Support” webpage](#) for additional information and templates).
- 5) **Research Plan**
 - a) The research plan must be prepared and assembled in the following order: Specific Aims, Background and Significance, Preliminary Results, Research Design and Methods, and References.
 - b) **Limit five pages, not including references.**
 - c) Results of unpublished observations may be summarized using text, tables or figures and must be included in the five-page limit.
 - d) **References:** No specific format requested. **Limit 30 references.**
 - e) Include a header with your name (last name, first name) and a footer with page numbers on each page of the research plan (including references). Page numbers should start at 1 on the first page of the Research Plan.
- 6) **Research Facilities** – The research environment should be described, including, as applicable, laboratory space, access to patients’ materials or data, animals, core facilities, consultants and technical (including computer) resources, etc. **Limit one page.**
- 7) **Candidate’s Statement** – Describe the benefits of this award to your research career, the impact your mentor will have on your research development, and your academic goals. Please also highlight your previous studies and any contributions to knowledge in this field. **Limit one page.**
- 8) **Letter of Support from Mentor** – A letter of support from the applicant’s mentor is required. It must confirm that the applicant will have at least 50% of protected research time and the mentor will be available to provide advice and guidance to the applicant for the duration of the award. **Limit one page.**
- 9) **Letters of collaborations (optional)** – If the project involves collaborations, the applicant can opt to submit letters from collaborators deemed essential to the project success. **Limit one page each and no more than two letters.**

Submission Deadlines and Instructions

- 1) Submit your **Letter of Intent via email** by **June 27, 2025**.
- 2) Submit your **Application online** on the Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Award [webpage](#) by **July 25, 2025** by following the steps below. Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed.
 - a) Complete the “Applicant and Proposal Information” section in the online Submission form.
 - b) Applicants must select one Primary Type of Research and one Primary Topic for their research proposal. Applicants can submit up to five additional topics (optional).
 - c) Upload your Application Package as one PDF document as indicated above.
 - d) Click the **“Submit” button** to submit your application.
- 3) You will receive an email confirmation that the PDF was received. Check your spam folder and contact research@liverfoundation.org if you did not receive an email confirmation.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants will be evaluated based upon their background, their commitment to a research career, the scientific merit of their research project, the environment in which they will conduct this project, and the commitment of their research mentor.

Applications will be reviewed based on the written materials submitted. **Incomplete applications and applications that fail to adhere strictly to the instructions (including the submission deadline and page limitations) will not be reviewed.** All decisions are final.

PROGRESS REPORTS

A scientific progress report and a progress report in lay language must be provided within 60 days of completion of the award.

RESEARCH AWARD GLOSSARY

Basic Research: Research focused on fundamental scientific investigations and usually conducted in controlled laboratory settings, with the primary goal of understanding basic biology or disease mechanisms. It aims to expand knowledge, discover new principles, and understand underlying mechanisms without specific applications towards processes or products in mind. However, the results of basic research form the foundation for translational and clinical research. This category can involve animal studies, cell culture and other in vitro studies, “omics” research, and studies using human biospecimens or human data that cannot be linked to a specific individual.

Clinical Research: Patient-oriented research with the primary goal of directly impacting the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, or outcome of liver disease in patients. Clinical research often involves direct contact with human subjects and aims to assess the safety, efficacy, and effectiveness of medical interventions, treatments, or diagnostics to inform clinical practice and improve patient care. Clinical trials are a common form of clinical research, and it can also include interventional, observational, epidemiological, or behavioral studies, outcomes research, and health services research studies.

Grant Administrator: The staff member who oversees new grant agreements and grant payments; ensure that grants comply with relevant laws and regulations; guarantees that all required reports are submitted; and administers the grant after award.

Mentor: Faculty member or other experienced researcher who provides guidance, direction and support to the applicant. This person should have a vested interest in the career development and research experience of the applicant.

Public Health Service (PHS) 398 Forms and NIH Guidelines: The PHS 398 Form is the application form used to obtain federal grant support. Go to the [NIH website](#) to access the PHS 398 “Biosketch” Form and PHS 398 Instructions that have useful tips and directions for completing a Research Plan.

Translational Research: Research that bridges the gap between basic research and clinical research, with the goal of translating observations from the laboratory, clinic, and community into potential interventions that improve health. Translational research can include converting basic research discoveries into practical medical interventions, therapies, or diagnostics that can then be tested in clinical research studies. For example, if basic research identifies a gene that could play a role in a certain disease, translational research could identify ways to target this gene and test their efficacy in the laboratory before moving to human testing. Translational research also investigates how results of successful clinical research studies can be translated into best practices and implemented by physicians in clinical care.