Research Fellowships: Why, What, and How?

Kate Ross

kross@rockefeller.edu

Senior Manager, Complex Programs and Training

Office of Sponsored Programs Administration
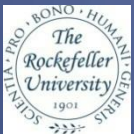
http://www2.rockefeller.edu/sr-pd/index.php?page=Training_Area

RRB 110

October 5, 2018

Why Apply for Funding

- Prepare for a career as an independent investigator
- Be an active member of the larger research community and participate in the discovery process
- Secure resources for training & research expenses
- Write up your findings (for future publications)
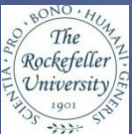
Pre-Doctoral Sponsored Funding

- Fellowships
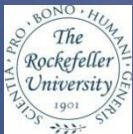- Training Grants
- Dissertation Grants

Where to Apply

- Federal
  - [NIH](#)
  - [NSF](#)
  - [Department of Defense](#)
  - Other federal sponsors as relevant funding programs are made available
- Foundations
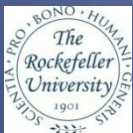- Internal (via Deans Office and Development)

Resources for Finding Funding Opportunities

- SR-PD
  - [Predoctoral Fellowship Funding Sources](#)
  - [Funding Opportunities](#) Database
  - SR-PD weekly Funding alerts
  - [Pivot database](#)
  - Other [Grant Seeking Resources](#) maintained by Program Development
  - Mentor and peers

Opportunities for non-US Citizens

- While some sponsors have citizenship requirements, many opportunities exist for international students
  - Opportunities Restricted to US Citizens/Permanent Residents
  - Opportunities Restricted to Other Citizenship/Nationalities
  - Unrestricted Opportunities
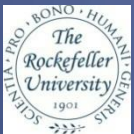- Review [Predoctoral Fellowship Funding Sources](#)

NSF GRFP Application

- Submitted directly by applicant via NSF FastLane

- Review GRFP announcement [NSF 18-573](#)

- Application Components:
  - Personal, Relevant Background and Future Goals Statement (3 pages)
  - Graduate Research Plan Statement (2 pages)
  - Transcripts, uploaded into FastLane
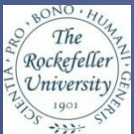 - Three letters of reference required

Deadline and Eligibility

- Life Sciences applications are due 10/22/18

- Reference Letters due November 2, 2018

- Must be US Citizen, national, or perm resident

- Grad students are limited to only <u>1</u> submission, either in the first or second year of grad school.
  - Must have completed no more than 12 months full time grad school by August 1
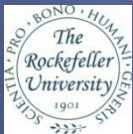
NSF's Merit Review Criteria

- Intellectual Merit
  - Demonstrated potential to advance knowledge
    - Strength of Academic Record
    - Research Plan
    - Previous Experience and/or publications
    - Institution

- Broader Impacts
  - Potential of applicant to benefit society
    - Educational Experiences
    - Integration of research & education
    - Potential to reach diverse audiences and benefit society

Broader Impacts Criteria

- From [FAQs](#) for applicants to GRFP:

Broader impacts may be accomplished through the research itself, through the activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to, the project. NSF values the advancement of scientific knowledge and activities that contribute to achievement of societally relevant outcomes. Such outcomes include, but are not limited to: full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in STEM; improved STEM education and educator development at any level; increased public scientific literacy and public engagement with science and technology; improved well-being of individuals in society; development of a diverse, globally competitive STEM workforce; increased partnerships between academia, industry, and others; improved national security; increased economic competitiveness of the US; and enhanced infrastructure for research and education.

NDSEG Fellowship

- [National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate Fellowship](#)
- Fellowship is for up to 3 years and covers tuition, fees, monthly stipend ($3,200) and up to $1,200/yr for insurance
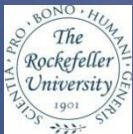- Application window closes December 7, 2018

NDSEG Eligibility

- US citizenship requirement
- At or near the beginning of doctoral studies (less than 2 years graduate study)
- Field of study must fit into one of the supported disciplines
  - Biosciences (including toxicology)
  - Chemistry
  - Cognitive, Neural, and Behavioral Sciences
  - Physics (including optics)

NDSEG Fellowship - Application

- Personal Statement (500 words)
  - Short and long-term goals
  - How did goals develop and what foundation has already begun
  - How does fellowship fit into these goals
- Proposed Research Relevant to DoD (3 pages)
  - A proposal relevant to the DoD agency
  - Show why the project will make an important contribution to the Agency and why the project/proposed training is meritorious
- Official undergrad transcripts and GRE score
- 3 Letters of Reference

NIH Kirschstein National Research Service Awards (NRSA)

- F31 Predoctoral
  supports promising doctoral candidates who will be performing dissertation research and training in scientific health-related fields

- F32 Postdoctoral
  supports promising applicants with potential to become productive and successful independent research investigators in scientific health-related fields

- T32 Institutional Training Grant
  supports institutions with established programs of supervised research career development in the fields of biomedical and behavioral research
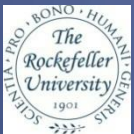
New F99/K00 Program

- Award to facilitate the transition from graduate student to postdoctoral researcher

- Intended for grad students who require 1-2 years to complete their PhD (F99 phase) before transitioning to mentored postdoc (K00 phase, up to 4 years)

- NCI has current Transition Award (RFA-CA-19-002)
  - No citizenship requirement

- Neuroscience Diversity Award just announced (RFA-NS-19-011)
  - Must be US Citizen or permanent resident

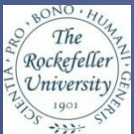- Other Institutes and Centers may offer program in future

American Heart Association

- No citizenship requirements (must have approved Visa)
- Objective: to initiate careers in cardiovascular and stroke research
- [Previous Deadline](): 7/11/18
- You should be done with coursework and devoting 100% effort to research at time of award activation (Jan 1)
- $23,844 stipend plus $1,000 for health insurance and $2,000 for project costs (supplies, travel, etc.) for two yrs
- Review Criteria: Trainee potential; Sponsor/Training Plan and Environment; Evaluation of Research Proposal
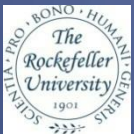
Tips for All Fellowships

- Follow guidelines to the letter!
  - Some sponsors are especially interested in more novel/innovative projects
  - Many are focused on applicant's potential and track record (transcript, publications, etc.)
  - Many also ask for mentor's track record and institutional environment
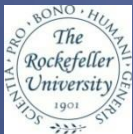 - Always keep the review criteria in mind!

Additional Elements

- Provide easy to read, carefully proofed, logical, succinct and coherent narrative.
- Meet format requirements:
  - Font type and size
  - Margins
  - Other as needed
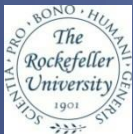- Never exceed the sponsor's page limit

Steps To Beginning Your Proposal

- Start early!
- Review the funding program you deem relevant
- When available, review recently [funded proposals](#)
- Find out [success rate](#) at target agency/institute
- Discuss your research/proposal with your mentor
- Contact the Program Official/Director
- Secure reference letters
- Register with sponsor
- Work with your [Sponsored Programs Officer](#)

Summary of Key Resources

- Mentor
- Peers
- RU Office of Sponsored Programs Administration
  - Forms and format
  - Budget (e.g personnel effort & costs, indirect costs)
  - Boilerplates
  - Your Sponsored Programs Officer
  - Website
  - NIH Fellowship Checklist
- Sponsor's website
- NIH
  - RePORT
  - Program Official
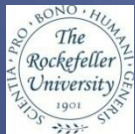 - Office of Extramural Research

Preparing the Proposal

- Review scope of the funding opportunity announcement
- Make note of the deadline
- Verify eligibility with your [Sponsored Programs Officer](#)
- Get your Mentor's consent
- Read closely the guidelines/instructions – including special submission requirements
- Design your outline and research plan according to the sponsor's instructions
- Discuss training and research plan with your mentor
- Fully address the review criteria in the order presented by the sponsor

Questions and Suggestions