

2026-27 Clinical Fellowship Grants



APPLICATION GUIDELINES, INSTRUCTIONS & FAQs

As a premier funder of neurosurgical studies, the [Neurosurgery Research & Education Foundation](#) (NREF) focuses on providing fellowship funding in basic neuroscience and neurosurgical programs in North America.

Please read this document in its entirety prior to completing the online application.

For the 2026-2027 academic year, the NREF will accept applications in all subspecialties. Fellowships will be awarded based on available funding at the conclusion of the application review period.

After reviewing the application and the information below, please contact NREF at info@nref.org if you have questions.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES, PROCEDURES & PROGRAM INFORMATION

General Information

- **Objective** - The objective of the fellowship grant is to fund post-residency clinical fellowships in the specialty of neurosurgery. Applications for enrolled fellowships (PGY7) will be accepted.
- **Period of Fellowship** - One year, beginning July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027
- **Amount of Fellowship Grant** - Fully-funded fellowship grants are awarded at \$75,000, but may be awarded in lesser amounts depending on available support. The grant is intended to cover the salary and benefits for the fellow first and some, if not all, related non-salary direct costs. Fellowship funds may not be used for indirect fellowship costs.
- **Deadline** - The deadline to submit an application is: **11:59 pm Saturday, November 1, 2025**
- **Background Information** - For a program overview, please visit the online [NREF Clinical Fellowship Grants](#) page. For additional information, please contact NREF via email at info@nref.org.

Eligibility

- Any academic institution or group practice with an established neurosurgery residency program in North America that qualifies as a non-profit, charitable entity may apply.
- A for-profit entity is not eligible unless affiliated with a non-profit entity.

Required Documentation

- Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) certification for neurosurgery residency program or the Canadian equivalent.
- Institution must provide proof of qualification as a non-profit, charitable entity (IRS determination letter).
- Certificate letter indicating CAST accreditation for neurologic surgery fellowship.
 - In the event the institution has applied for CAST accreditation, but has not yet received CAST accreditation, please submit a copy of the CAST accreditation request with the application.
 - NREF strongly encourages institutions to be accredited by CAST, but exceptions may be considered by the selection committee.
- Institution must provide the name of their Fellow, along with a current CV.

Application Access

- Visit the [NREF Online Grant Portal](#).
- To apply for an NREF grant, you can use your myAANS.org log-in or if you do not have one, you will need to create an account to access the portal.

Fellowship Funding

- **Overlap/Duplicate Funding** - Fellowship funding awarded by the NREF through this program cannot be duplicated by any other outside funding source but can be used to supplement fellowship costs up to the full cost of the fellowship. If the institution receives funding from another source for a fellowship awarded by NREF through this program, the institution's Fellowship Program Director must notify the NREF immediately. Notification must be sent to NREF by email to info@nref.org.
- **Post-Chief Year Enfolded Fellowships** – Applications must be submitted by the institution where the fellowship will take place. If the Fellow is a PGY7 from a different institution, there must be a Memo of Understanding (MOU) in place to govern the funds flow agreement between the Fellow's parent institution and the fellowship institution. Funding for an enfolded fellowship will be directed to the institution specified in the MOU. Post-graduate fellowship funding goes to the fellowship institution.

Notification of Award

- **The foundation expects to notify each applicant via email by April 15, 2026.** However, public announcement will be contingent upon receipt of written confirmation from applicants. The Foundation reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to extend the date for it to provide notification of awards.

Fiscal Policies and Reports

- Fellowship grant payments will be made in three (3) increments:
 - 50% by the start of the fellowship (July 2026),
 - 40% in January 2027, and
 - 10% after final reports are received (see below)
- An interim summary report is required to be submitted by the fellow describing his/her experience along with a current accounting of funds within 180 days of the start of the fellowship
- A final summary report is required to be submitted by the fellow describing his/her experience along with a final accounting of funds. These reports are due within 40 days of the conclusion of the fellowship.
- Ten percent (10%) of the grant funds will be withheld until the reports referenced above are received by the NREF. Upon receipt of both reports, the remaining withheld funds will be sent to the grantee institution.
- At the conclusion of the fellowship, any unexpended balance of \$100 or more must be refunded to NREF within forty-five (45) days together with the report of expenditures and accompanying documentation.
- All final reports must be submitted electronically to NREF at info@nref.org.
- Separate accounting of the fellowship grant funds should be maintained at the receiving institution. These accounts, with appropriate and related invoices and payroll information, must be available at all times to NREF representatives.
- The grantee may terminate a fellowship grant prior to the planned expiration date by notifying the NREF in writing and stating the reasons for termination. Unexpended funds must be returned to the NREF within sixty (60) days, together with a final report of expenditures. The NREF reserves the right to terminate fellowship grants at any time if the grantee violates the terms and conditions of the grant.
- Policy on Delinquent Financial/Research Reports
 - The Foundation reserves the right to deny additional fellowship grants to any institution where, after proper notification, a fellow has not submitted his/her final reports, and/or the financial officer has not submitted the final report of expenses, as required by NREF.
 - The NREF will not issue final payments to institutions until both reports are received.

Publication

- The NREF encourages publication of research findings by fellows, but requires that the NREF is cited as a source of support on the first page of the text.
- When a fellow presents a paper at a professional scientific meeting concerning research findings made during the course of an NREF funded fellowship, the NREF must be cited prior to the beginning of the presentation.
- Send NREF reprints of all papers and publications, including any electronic papers or publications, resulting from work done during the course of a fellowship, even those appearing after the fellowship has concluded.
- The citation should appear in the Acknowledgements section as follows:
This work is supported by the Neurosurgery Research & Education Foundation (2026-27 Clinical Fellowship Grant).

Frequently-Asked Questions

1. Can fellowship support be secured from more than one funding source?

- Funding for a fellowship awarded by the NREF through this program cannot be duplicated by any other outside funding source. For example, a \$75,000 spine fellowship cannot receive funding from the NREF at \$75,000 and a secondary funding source at \$75,000; only one can be accepted. However, a \$100,000 fellowship can receive funding from the NREF at \$75,000 and \$25,000 from a secondary source. If the institution receives funding from another source for a fellowship awarded by NREF through this program, the institution must notify the NREF immediately and return any overage in fellowship funding. Notification must be sent to NREF at info@nref.org.

2. Who can apply?

- Any academic institution or group practice with an established neurosurgery residency program in North America that qualifies as a non-profit, charitable entity may apply. A for-profit entity is not eligible unless affiliated with a non-profit entity.

3. Is United States Citizenship a requirement for the fellow?

- No, fellows do not have to be U.S. citizens. However, a fellow must have satisfactorily completed an ACGME-accredited residency training program in neurological surgery (or the Canadian equivalent).

4. Do I need to name the fellow on the application?

- Yes. The fellow must be identified on the application, and a current CV must be uploaded. An application that does not include this information will be considered incomplete and will not proceed to the review process.

5. How many fellowships are funded each year?

- The number of CF grants funded by the NREF depends upon the contributions from corporate and partner supporters as well as the number of eligible applications received. The NREF is hopeful that the number of funded fellowships will meet or exceed past funding levels.

6. How can the Fellowship funds be used?

- The grant is intended to cover the salary and benefits for the fellow first and some, if not all, related non-salary direct costs. Fellowship funds may not be used for indirect fellowship costs.

7. When would this fellowship grant start?

- The grant period begins on July 1st and ends on June 30th of the funded academic year.

8. How can applications be submitted?

- The application will be available online beginning September 1st. It can be found on the [NREF Online Grant Portal](#). Applicants without a myAANS.org log-in may need to create an account to access the application.

9. What items are required to ensure an application is complete?

- Letter of Accreditation from ACGME or the Canadian equivalent
- Certificate indicating CAST accreditation for neurologic surgery fellowship, if the fellowship is accredited by the Committee on Advanced Subspecialty Training (CAST) of the Society of Neurologic Surgeons (SNS).
- Biographical sketches for pertinent faculty members and CV for Fellow
- IRS Non-Profit Status Determination letter
- Signed IRS form W-9 with tax ID number
- All required fields are complete and application is signed

10. When is the application deadline?

- The application must be submitted by **11:59 PM (Central Standard Time), November 1st**.

11. Will applicants be notified that their application has been received?

- Yes. An administrative review of applications will take place and applicants will receive an email confirmation.

12. When will applicants be notified of the results of the selection process?

- The Foundation expects to notify applicants by April 15. However, public announcement is contingent upon receipt of written confirmation from the awardees. The Foundation reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to extend the date to provide award notification.

13. How will applications be evaluated?

- Applications for NREF Clinical Fellowships are reviewed and evaluated by subspecialty experts and the NREF Fellowship Committee. The committee considers, among other things, whether an applicant institution is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (“ACGME”) and whether the institution is accredited by the Committee on Advanced Subspecialty Training (CAST) of the Society of Neurologic Surgeons (SNS).

14. How are the funds disbursed to the institution?

- Fellowship grant payments will be made in three (3) increments:
 - 50% by the start of the fellowship (July)
 - 40% in January
 - 10% after final reports are received (see below)

15. What reporting is required?

- An interim summary report is required to be submitted by the fellow describing his/her experience along with a current accounting of funds within 180 days of the start of the fellowship
- A final summary report is required by the fellow describing his/her experience along with a final accounting of funds. These reports are due within 40 days of the conclusion of the fellowship. All final reports must be submitted electronically to NREF at info@nref.org.
- Ten percent (10%) of the grant funds will be withheld until the reports referenced above are received by the NREF. Upon receipt of both reports, the remaining withheld funds will be sent to the grantee institution.

16. What are the accounting requirements?

- At conclusion of fellowship, any unexpended balance of \$100 or more must be refunded to the Foundation within forty-five (45) days together with the report of expenditures and accompanying documentation.
- Separate accounting of the fellowship grant funds should be maintained at the receiving institution. These accounts, with appropriate and related invoices and payroll information, must be available at all times to NREF representatives.

17. What is the policy on delinquent financial/research reports?

- The Foundation reserves the right to deny additional fellowship grants to any institution where, after proper notification, a fellow has not submitted his/her final reports, and/or the financial officer has not submitted the final report of expenses, as required by NREF. Further, the NREF will not issue final payments to institutions until both reports are received.

18. How should NREF be referenced in publications or presentations?

- The NREF encourages publication of research findings by fellows, but requires that the NREF is cited as a source of support on the first page of the text.
- When a fellow presents a paper at a professional scientific meeting concerning research findings made during the course of an NREF-funded fellowship, the NREF must be cited prior to the beginning of the presentation.
- The NREF should be sent reprints of all papers and publications, including any electronic papers or publications, resulting from work done during the course of a fellowship, even those that appear after the fellowship has concluded.

19. Why are companies working with the NREF on fellowship grant funding?

- Agreements like this with the NREF are intended to help companies support high-quality education and training in neurosurgery in an independent and transparent manner.
- By contracting with the NREF to administer the fellowship grant program, companies are also able to reduce staff time and related internal costs that are associated with the fellowship grant process. Under the terms of agreement, the NREF is responsible for all aspects of the fellowship grant program, including but not limited to the review and approval of grant applications.

20. Who should I contact if I have a question about the Clinical Fellowship Grant programs?

- For additional information, please contact NREF at 847.378.0500 or via email at info@nref.org.