

2026-27 NSTP Research Grant (Year 2)



SNS Neurosurgeon-Scientist Training Program (NSTP) Research Grant Application Guidelines

Background and General Program Structure

The [Society of Neurological Surgeons](#) has established a two-year **Neurosurgeon-Scientist Training Program (NSTP)** to increase the pool of neurosurgery residents conducting research and to enhance their success rate in becoming independent neurosurgeon-scientists. Additional research by clinician-scientist neurosurgeons is critical to the fundamental discovery that advances new methods of care and new cures.

The NSTP will serve as a formal mentored research program for those neurosurgery residents who are beginning a protected research year or who have already completed their protected research year. The primary goal of this new program is to provide participants with the skills, mentorship, education, and experience needed to successfully compete for individual research funding (e.g., NIH K award and R01 grants) and launch productive research careers. Awardees have access to neurosurgeon-scientist mentors through a national network organization and will participate in the Annual NINDS R25 workshop.

Applicants will submit a written application to the program and be interviewed virtually by a selection committee. It is anticipated that up to 4-5 candidates per year will be selected based on the application process. Selected residents beginning their protected year of research in Year 1 of the NSTP program will be provided a travel stipend to attend the CNS and NINDS R25 neurosurgeon-scientist symposiums in the fall and spring, respectively. All those selected for support in Year 1 will be assigned a central NSTP mentor, who will work synergistically with the awardee's local mentor to guide the awardee.

The Research Grant (Year 2) funding is for people who have completed their dedicated research year, and the Travel Grant (Year 1) funding is for people who are doing their dedicated research year.

All awardees who complete Year 1 of the program will be eligible to apply for funding to support continuation of their research project in the year after their Year 1 support (i.e., Year 2). Residents are eligible for continued support in Year 2 whether they are continuing with protected research time or going back into clinical training full-time. Residents who have completed a year of protected research outside of the NSTP can also apply for Year 2 entry into the NSTP. The key to obtaining research support in Year 2 will be making good progress in their research during Year 1, clear plans for use of the Year 2 funding and a well-considered, specific plan to successfully use the Year 2 funding to help transition to a K award application.

Applicant interviews for entry into Years 1 and 2 will be completed virtually in March 2026 and award winners will be announced in April 2026. The NSTP start date for both Years 1 and 2 will be July 1, 2026. **NSTP Applications are due by December 15, 2025.**

- **Applications will be accepted for Year 2 support from individuals who are currently in their protected research year between July 2026 and June 2027. Residents who have completed a year of protected research outside of the NSTP can also apply for Year 2 entry into the NSTP.**
- **No indirect support will be provided by the NSTP; funding will be provided to the institution of the NSTP grant recipient.**
- **A mid-cycle progress report will be required to receive the second allotment of funding for Year 2.**
- **For all submissions and any questions, please email NREF at info@nref.org.**
- **Applications are being accepted in all subspecialties.**

SNS Neurosurgeon-Scientist Training Program (NSTP) Year 2 Application Guidelines, continued

- **Application Due:** December 15, 2025
- **Candidate Interviews:** March 2026
- **Notification of Awardees:** April 15, 2026
- **Start date in NSTP program:** July 1, 2026
- Applications will only be considered for those who will have started a protected year of research in July 2026 and completed a 12-month protected year of research by July 1, 2027. Applications will be accepted from residents who were not part of the Year 1 NSTP.
- Awards will consist of up to \$50,000 for well-justified research costs associated with continuing a research project towards the anticipated submission of an NIH K or R01 award during their first faculty year. If the resident is returning back to clinical rotations during Year 2, funding can be used for supporting a lab technician, graduate student, or postdoctoral graduate student. Year 2 recipients are also expected to attend the CNS Annual Meeting and NIH NINDS R25 neurosurgeon- scientist symposiums.
- **Applications must include the following:**
 - **5-page application**, written by resident, consisting of research plan, training plan, plan to get to an NIH K award (includes timing of entire research activity /clinical activity from application date to end of residency) and the general expectation for the K research project, and how the proposed research will lead to the anticipated K award project.
 - The first four (4) pages must include a description of the progress made on the research project during residency prior to submission of the application, specific aims, background/significance, research plan for each specific aim that includes: methods, statistical approach, expected results, pitfalls/alternatives, plan to minimize experimental and analytical bias and how the proposed research will lead to an NIH K or R01-equivalent award. Bibliography is not included in 4-page limit.
 - The final page should describe a gap-based career development plan (includes mentorship plan, institutional support, and plan for a K award that incorporates timing of research/clinical activity)
 - **Candidate NIH biosketch** (Five page maximum)
 - **Mentor NIH Biosketch:** Please submit a biosketch for each mentor on the project. This should include a personal statement specifically relevant to this application.
 - **Mentor(s) roles and qualifications description document** (One page limit)
 - **Letters of Recommendation:** One (1) from the Mentor(s), Program Director, and Chair.
 - **Mentor(s):** One letter from all mentors should describe the mentoring/training plan, how the mentor intends to help the candidate get to a K award, description of ownership of project by candidate, description of intellectual contribution of candidate to project. The mentor cannot simply have the candidate working on an on-going project that cannot be turned into an original project by the candidate to apply for a K award. If the proposed project did originate with the mentor, a clear description of how this project will lead to a K award project fully owned by the candidate must be clearly explained.
 - **Residency Program Director**
 - **Chair** describes the institutional commitment to the candidate and plan for oversight to ensure that the candidate makes excellent progress on the research project in Year 2. This is especially critical for candidates who will be spending limited time doing research due to clinical training demands.

Note: Applications are being accepted in all subspecialties.