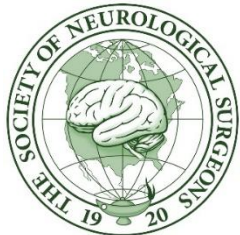


# 2027-28 SNS NSTP Grant



## 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 will have access to neurosurgeon-scientist mentors through a national network organization.

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 2027 and award winners will be announced in April 2027. The NSTP start date for both Years 1 and 2 will be July 1, 2027. **NSTP Applications are due by December 15, 2026.**

- Applications will be accepted for Year 2 support from individuals who are currently in their protected research year between July 2027 and June 2028. 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](mailto:info@nref.org).
- Applications are being accepted in all subspecialties.

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

- **Application Due:** December 15, 2026
- **Candidate Interviews:** March 2027
- **Notification of Awardees:** April 15, 2027
- **Start date in NSTP program:** July 1, 2027
- Applications will only be considered for those who will have started a protected year of research in July 2027 and completed a 12-month protected year of research by July 1, 2028. 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 required to attend two (2) mentorship events. Qualifying events include: RUNN course (Fall 2027); Neurosurgeon-Scientist symposium at the CNS meeting (Fall 2027); K12/EIP program during the AANS Annual Scientific Meeting (Spring 2028). Other meetings (e.g., UE5 symposium) may be an option pending their addition to the event calendar.
- **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 critical for candidates who will be spending limited time doing research due to clinical training demands.

**Note:** Applications are being accepted in all subspecialties.

## Submission Instructions

- Log in to [NREF Online Grant Portal](#).
- To apply for a grant, you will need to create an account or use your myAANS.org login to access the portal.

## Application Procedure

- The project proposal should be in NIH format and include the following elements:
  - Specific Aims
  - Significance
  - Innovation
  - Preliminary Findings
  - Approach
- NOTE: Including these elements should not be interpreted as a guarantee of an award. Please keep the proposal to a maximum of five (5) pages using NIH guidelines (for margins, line spacing, and font size including the following):
  - Margins
    - Paper size no larger than standard letter paper size (8 ½" x 11")
    - At least one-half in margins (1/2") – top, bottom, left, and right – for all pages
  - Line Spacing
    - No more than six lines per vertical inch. To ensure, you can set line spacing to "exactly 12 pt.". This can be done in the paragraph settings panel in Word's layout tab.
  - Font Size
    - At least 11 pt font size; recommended fonts: Arial, Georgia, Helvetica, or Palatino Linotype.
  - Please see the following link for full NIH grant guidelines: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-and-write/format-attachments.htm>
  - Other elements that should be included in the grant submission, but are not considered part of the five (5) page limit, are as follows:
    - References
    - Career Development Plan (1-page limit)
    - Vertebrate Animals (2-page limit)
    - Letters of Support
  - Based on an evaluation of proposals from recent awardees, here are some factors to consider:
    - Does the research have potential for extramural funding? Is there strong preliminary data?
    - Does the project represent a new direction from existing research efforts? Is the study innovative?
    - What is the societal impact and potential applications of the research? Would a positive outcome contribute to the field?
    - Are the goals, objective and anticipated results clearly defined, logical and well-described in the proposal? Is the scope of the project realistic for timeframe?
    - Is the research environment supportive? Does the institution offer strong mentorship?

### **Notification of Award**

The SNS expects to notify applicants by April 15<sup>th</sup>. However, public announcement is 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 quarterly:
  - 25% at the start of the grant period (by July 15<sup>th</sup>)
  - 25% by October 15<sup>th</sup>
  - 25% by January 15<sup>th</sup>
  - 25% after final summary report and final accounting are received
- 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 forty (40) days of the conclusion of the fellowship.
- Twenty-five percent (25%) of the grant funds will be withheld until reports referenced above are received by the SNS. 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 the Foundation within forty-five (45) days together with the report of expenditures and accompanying documentation.
- All final reports must be submitted electronically to 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 SNS 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 SNS within sixty (60) days, together with a final report of expenditures. The SNS 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 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 SNS. Further, the SNS will not issue final payments to institutions until both reports are received.

### **Publication**

- The SNS encourages publication of research findings by fellows, but requires that the SNS 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 an SNS-funded fellowship, the SNS must be cited prior to beginning the presentation.
- Reprints of all papers and publications, including any electronic papers or publications, resulting from work done during the course of a fellowship must be sent to SNS, even those that appear after the fellowship has ended.
- The citation should appear in the Acknowledgements section as follows:
- *This work is supported by the Society of Neurological Surgeons (2027-28 Neurosurgeon-Scientist Training Program (NSTP)).*

## Frequently-Asked Questions

- 1. Who can apply?**
  - a. Neurosurgery residents who are beginning a protected research year or who have already completed their protected research year
- 2. Does the applicant need to be a United States citizen?**
  - a. U.S. Citizenship is not required to apply.
- 3. Who should I ask to provide a letter of recommendation?**
  - a. When requesting a letter or recommendation, it is important that the writer is able to speak to your research interests and your qualifications.
  - b. Letters of reference must be on letterhead and signed.
- 4. How many awardees per institution are allowed?**
  - a. Usually, no more than one award per year will be given to any one institution. However, the final decision is at the discretion of the SNS NSTP Award Committee.
- 5. What is the award amount?**
  - a. Typically, each grant is \$50,000 but the amount may be adjusted depending on available funding.
- 6. What is the grant period?**
  - a. The grant period begins July 1<sup>st</sup> following the award and ending June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- 7. Can funding be accepted from other sources?**
  - a. No. If a grant is obtained from another source for the same project, SNS funding will be withheld and given to another applicant. It is the applicant's responsibility to notify the SNS if this occurs.
- 8. How are applications submitted?**
  - a. Applications are only available through the **[NREF Online Grant Portal](#)**
- 9. What is the application deadline?**
  - a. The completed application must be submitted by 11:59 PM (Central Standard Time), December 15<sup>th</sup>.
- 10. Will I be notified that my application was received?**
  - a. Yes, you will receive an automated acknowledgement via the grant portal when your application is submitted. There will also be an administrative review that takes place after December 15<sup>th</sup>.
  - b. Applicants will receive confirmation via email by December 31<sup>st</sup> that their application was received and moved on to the review process <mailto:nref@aans.org>.
- 11. When will awardees be notified?**
  - a. Notification of awards will be made by April 15<sup>th</sup>. All applicants will be notified whether or not they receive an award.
  - b. The SNS reserves the right to extend the date to provide award notification.

**12. What is the policy for extension requests?**

- a. Requests for a No Cost Extension will be considered, but are subject to approval from the Chair of the SNS NSTP Award Committee. Send requests to NREF at [info@nref.org](mailto:info@nref.org).

**13. What are the reporting requirements?**

- a. A summary report is required at the halfway point (180 days from beginning of grant period) and a final report and accounting of funds is required within forty (40) days of the completion of the grant period.

**14. What should be included in the reports?**

- a. *Interim Report Outline* – The report should address the following questions:
  - i. Are you on track to complete the project within the proposed budget?
  - ii. Have you encountered any unexpected challenges, or created any unexpected benefits?
  - iii. If yes, what changes would you like to make to the goals/objectives?
  - iv. If yes, what changes would you like to make to the original budget?
  - v. Are there aspects of your efforts to date that merit publicity?
- b. *Final Report and Accounting of Funds* – The report should address the following questions:
  - i. Were the outcomes that you detailed in your proposal achieved?
  - ii. Were there any unexpected challenges encountered, or any unexpected benefits?
  - iii. Have the grant funds been utilized as proposed and fully utilized?
  - iv. Do you have plans to pursue additional funding from other sources to continue your research?
  - v. Please describe any impact this project will have on the future of your research and the community/constituents you serve.
  - vi. Are there aspects of your efforts to date that merit publicity?
  - vii. The SNS would like to continually improve its grant making process. Do you have any recommendations for improving how our grants are promoted or the process in general?

**15. What are the budget requirements?**

- a. A comprehensive budget must be prepared by the applicant and sponsor indicating how award will be used. Funds may be used in part or entirely for stipend. It is SNS policy to fund only direct costs involved with research awards. Proceeds must not be used to acquire or cover fringe benefits, publication costs, etc.

**16. Who is the payee?**

- a. Awards will be made payable to the institution. To expedite the proper disbursement of awards, grant recipients must be sure to provide the correct payee information with the grant agreement.

**17. What is the policy for unused funds?**

- a. Any funds that are not used at the end of the engagement period must be returned to the SNS.

**18. How is the grant administered?**

- a. The SNS is the official administrator of the grant program. The NREF oversees the application process including receipt, processing, and organizing the review of applications.
- b. Applications are subject to a review process by members of the SNS.
- c. The NREF manages the distribution of funds to the institutions awarded grants by the SNS.