KidneyCure
The ASN Foundation CureKidneyDiseases.org

KidneyCure Pre-Doctoral Fellowship Program

Application Instructions

Applicants and sponsors **must** have a current American Society of Nephrology (ASN) membership when the application cycle closes on **Thursday, November 19, 2026**. Check your membership status online here.

Applicants may only submit one application during a cycle.

KidneyCure will make an Award solely in accordance with KidneyCure policies, payment, and schedule regulations as described in the original Notice of Award and Grant Stipulations.

Purpose

The mission of the KidneyCure Pre-Doctoral Fellowship Program is to attract PhD students to nephrology as a research area in the early stages of their careers.

Eligibility

Please note that the eligibility criteria have been updated.

Doctoral students interested in clinical or basic science may submit a proposal that examines any aspect of the entire spectrum of kidney biology and disease.

KidneyCure encourages applications from individuals whose personal backgrounds or life experiences may contribute valuable perspectives to nephrology, particularly those who have encountered barriers to entry in the field.

A maximum of two applications per sponsor/mentor will be accepted during any given application cycle.

Pre-doctoral KidneyCure fellowships are available to PhD students regardless of citizenship **so long as they are working in North or Central America, or the Caribbean during the grant term.**

To apply for the KidneyCure Pre-Doctoral Fellowship Program, a candidate:

I. Must be a current graduate student in an accredited doctoral (PhD) program (graduate students enrolled in MSTP or dual MD/PhD degree do not qualify) and must have passed the qualifying exam or spent at least one year in their primary mentor's lab by the time of application submission.
II. May not hold an MD, PhD, DO, DVM, PharmD or equivalent terminal degree.
III. Must propose a research topic that is kidney-directed.
IV. Must complete research under the direction and mentorship of a primary sponsor who is performing kidney research.
V. Must be an active member of ASN (Membership Type: Student) when the application cycle closes on Thursday, November 19, 2026. ASN provides free membership to students and PhD

candidates. The sponsor and all co-sponsors of the candidate must also be an active member of ASN when the application cycle closes on Thursday, November 19, 2026.

VI. Can hold other external grant support but cannot have support totaling more than the National Institutes of Health guidelines for pre-doctoral students, including KidneyCure funds, at the time of the award activation (July 1, 2027). However, a candidate's institution may supplement the support provided by KidneyCure.

VII. Must commit a minimum of 75% time to research during the fellowship period.

VIII. Must have a sponsor who demonstrates sufficient funding to support the proposed study of the mentee throughout the fellowship period.

Extension Requests

KidneyCure will accept extension requests on a case-by-case basis to be applied to the eligibility window during a candidate's doctoral training period. Applicants must submit supporting documentation for requests, which can include family care responsibilities, medical concerns, disability, natural disasters, and active-duty military service.

An automatic 12-month extension will be applied per childbirth during the candidate's doctoral training. All parents, including those who adopt, are eligible for this particular extension.

To submit an extension request, please email grants@asn-online.org prior to the application deadline.

Funding and Stipulations

The KidneyCure Pre-Doctoral Fellowship Program provides each nephrology pre-doctoral fellow with $30,000 per year for up to two years, to begin on July 1 of the award year. Payments will be made to the pre-doctoral fellow's institution and must be used only for stipend support. Funds cannot be used for fringe benefits, project costs, travel expenses, or overhead costs.

Each recipient must submit a progress and financial report by May 1 of the first year. Second year funding is contingent on a satisfactory progress report. A final progress and financial report must be submitted at the end of the second year.

In addition, the recipient must attend the ASN Annual Meeting in both years as part of the ASN Kidney STARS program; in the second year, the recipient will submit an abstract for presentation at ASN Kidney Week (year two abstract submission is not required if an abstract is submitted in year one). The ASN Kidney STARS program provides $1,500 in travel support when the event is in-person and complimentary registration to the Annual Meeting at Kidney Week.

Recipients must acknowledge KidneyCure's support in publications and/or oral and poster presentations resulting from their proposed work.

Application Process

Applicants for the KidneyCure Pre-Doctoral Fellowship Program must be current ASN members to begin an application. To become a member, please visit the ASN Membership webpage.

To begin an application, visit the KidneyCure Pre-Doctoral Fellowship webpage. Click "Application" and log-in using ASN ID and password.

I. Download all templates and documents needed to complete your application (applicant biosketch, sponsor's biosketch, and research plan).

II. Prepare all documents for the application (applicant biosketch, sponsor's biosketch, research plan, letter from sponsor and permission to submit letter combined document, and the email addresses for two references).
III. Enter contact information, including research proposal title and three relevant keywords. Once submitted, these cannot be edited by the applicant.
IV. Upload Applicant's Biosketch (maximum of 1 MB).
V. Upload Sponsor's Biosketch (maximum of 1 MB).
VI. Upload the Research Project Plan using the KidneyCure provided template (maximum of 1 MB).
VII. Upload the letter(s) from the sponsor/mentor
VIII. Upload the permission to submit letter (maximum of 1 MB).
IX. Enter the email address of two (2) references. Each reference will receive an email with a link to upload a letter of reference to the application. The applicant will not be copied on the reference request emails as the letters should be submitted blindly. *Please enter email addresses early in the application process to allow references to submit letters prior to the deadline.*
X. Once you enter all reference contacts and send the emails, click submit.

Application Checklist

- ✓ Ensure that everyone on the application is an ASN member
- ✓ Complete demographic and project information
- ✓ Upload applicant's biosketch
- ✓ Upload sponsor's and co-sponsor's (if applicable) biosketches
- ✓ Upload Research Project Plan (maximum of 7.5 pages total, not including references)
    - Roadmap to a Career in Kidney Research (2 page maximum)
    - Specific Aims (1 page maximum)
    - Optional Resubmission Defense (500 words maximum)
    - Preliminary Work, Proposed Research Strategy and Potential Problems (4 page maximum)
    - References (e.g. cited literature)
- ✓ Upload letter from sponsor and optional second letter of support
- ✓ Upload letter documenting permission to submit
- ✓ Send emails to two individuals for letters of reference

Application and Document Formatting

Additional supporting documents or letters beyond those described below are discouraged and if provided will not factor into review. To apply for a research fellowship, a nephrology pre-doctoral fellow must provide:

I. Contact Information and Project Title
II. Applicant Biosketch (using a modified NIH Biosketch format that includes Section D. Additional Information: Academic Performance and Research Support) (Maximum 5 pages)
    a. The biosketch should include a personal statement that discusses career goals, mentor selection, and why the applicant has an interest in kidney-related research.
III. Sponsor(s) Biosketch (using a modified NIH Biosketch format that includes Section D. Additional Information: Research Support) (Maximum 5 pages per sponsor) A primary sponsor must be clearly identified.
    a. For applications with co-sponsors, please submit a biosketch for each co-sponsor.
IV. Research Project Plan (Maximum of 7.5 pages total, not including references)
    a. The Roadmap to a Career in Kidney Research must answer the following prompts (Maximum 2 pages). ***This must be written by the applicant.***
        i. Please describe the role of the faculty mentor in the candidate's future research training and in their proposed research project.
        ii. Please explain how this graduate fellowship will enable the candidate to gain greater exposure to and experience in the field of nephrology.
    b. Specific Aims (Maximum 1 page)
    c. Optional Resubmission Defense (500 words maximum)

i. If you are resubmitting a proposal from a previous cycle, explain how you addressed the comments of the reviewers to improve your project or proposal. Please include along with the resubmission defense the score sheets from your previous submission. Score sheets for resubmissions will not count against the 7.5 page maximum for the Research Project Plan.

d. Background, Significance, Preliminary Work, Proposed Research Strategy, Potential Problems and Alternative Approaches (Maximum 4 pages)

e. References (e.g. cited literature)

V. Letter of Support from Sponsor (Sponsor Training Plan)*

The letter from the sponsor should be from the primary sponsor and it must include the following:

a. The mentoring history of the sponsor.

b. A description of the candidate.

c. A statement that the candidate is in an accredited PhD program

d. A statement that the candidate has passed their qualifying exam or spent at least one year in their primary mentor's lab by the time of application submission.

e. A description of the training plan for the candidate and how the proposed project is built on the student's expertise and will help the student to further develop and to support their career goals.

f. *An **optional** second letter of support can be submitted should the applicant have a potential collaborator. Please combine the optional collaborator letter with Letter of Support from Sponsor.

VI. Letter from the institution documenting permission to submit application (this letter should be submitted by an institution or department official/representative, not the sponsor/mentor)

a. The letter must include statement that the applicant's institution is aware of the program guidelines and has approved submission of the application.

VII. Two (2) Additional Reference Letters

a. Reference letters must be submitted prior to the application deadline.

b. Reference letters should be written by individuals familiar with the candidate's scientific interests and abilities and cannot be authored by individuals involved in the project in other roles such as a sponsor or collaborator. Letters are submitted blindly and can be addressed to the KidneyCure Pre-Doctoral Fellowship Program Review Panel. Please note that the reference letters are only one component of the application review process.

Additionally, the proposal must follow NIH guidelines, including the following formatting guidelines:

- Font size must be 11 points or larger. Smaller text in figures, graphs, diagrams and charts is acceptable as long as it is legible when the page is viewed at 100%. Recommended fonts include Arial, Georgia, Helvetica, and Palatino Linotype. A Symbol font may be used to insert special characters. Black text color is also recommended.
- Type density, including characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per linear inch. Type may be no more than six lines per vertical inch. Use standard paper size (8 ½" x 11"). Use at least one-half inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) for all pages. No information should appear in the margins. Do not include additional headers or footers aside from those established in the provided templates.
- Uploaded files must be in PDF formats only. Documents may be prepared using a preferred editing software (e.g. Microsoft Word), but must be converted to PDF format before uploading to the application. Please note that some PDF conversion software may reduce font size. The final PDF document must comply with the font requirements listed above.
- Applications must follow the maximum page limits described in Sections I.-IV. to be considered eligible.

You must use the KidneyCure-provided Research Project Plan template. Please download it from the KidneyCure website.

Applications that do not adhere to the above instructions will be administratively withdrawn.

Editing an Application Before the Deadline

Application fields may be edited at any point before the deadline. Applications cannot be edited after the deadline.

Notification of Award

In April, all applicants will receive an email from KidneyCure announcing that their application status has changed. The email will contain a unique link that will redirect the user to the KidneyCure Grant Submission Panel. Once logged in, the applicant can view the funding decision and download the reviewer comments. All documents in the applicant's KidneyCure Grant Submission Panel will remain live for 30 days after the funding notification.

Contact

Please contact KidneyCure with any questions at grants@asn-online.org.