

Why American Heart:

- no US residency requirement – foreign students/postdocs are welcome

Program	FY 24-25*
AHA Institutional Research Enhancement Award (AIREA)	37.5%
Career Development Award	26.8%
Collaborative Sciences Award	20.4%
Established Investigator Award	25.0%
Innovative Project Award	17.0%
Institutional Award for Undergraduate Student Training	100%
Merit Award	16.7%
Postdoctoral Fellowship	26.4%
Predocctoral Fellowship	27.2%
Research Supplement	56.0%
Strategically Focused Research Network	18.5%
Transformational Project Award	14.0%

NOTES:

*Success rate is the percent of proposals funded.

Educational:

the focus is not a delivery of outcomes defined in Specific Aims.

Criteria:

- **relevance** to AHA goals: – broadly defined, but it cannot be a gimmick.
- **applicant:** very detailed (potential is important)
- **mentor:** mentor cannot ride on his/her past educational performance. There has to be specific and detailed Educational Plan (Group meetings; Journal Clubs are NOT enough.) *(The more thoughtful is Educational Plan → the more effort PI put into the AHA application → the bigger is PIs commitment to the applicant)*

[the mentor's funding is considered. Make sure your mentor's letter is specific to you]

Research Project

- **Research plan:** complete, but make sure that it is not overreaching - it is NOT an R01. Reviewers expect significant preliminary data.
- **Clarity and organization:** clear thinking organized student/postdoc is a must
- **Critical:** address potential pitfalls and the ways to deal with them (a must for more advanced applications)
- **Educational:** The research plan should be educational: if you happened to be an expert in the field (postdocs might be) make sure that you emphasize new things/new approaches.
- **Career advancement:** make connection how this particular project fits with your career development.

Evaluation: 3-legged stool analogy

- applicant / mentor / project
- balance is very important:
 - saw great students, great research but not convinced about commitment of the PI [EXAMPLE – same letter from PI for two different candidates)
 - great mentor, great research but the applicant failed organic chemistry as a undergrad. [explain if there are mitigating circumstances]
 - (students coming from the Universities using other grading systems: mention different grade scales – there are online calculators that let you convert from a non-4.0 scale to the US scale)

Odds and Ends

- **Panels** are very uneven, wide spectrum of opinions some competent other not quite.
- **Roulette:** unpredictability of the process
- **Resubmission:** panels change every year, resubmissions especially with explicitly the addressed improvements are always scored differently.

More odds and ends

- **motivation:** why even applying ?
- You get a little financial benefit. It is mainly for your mentor benefit who does not have to spend grant money to support you. But it enhances your CV.
- Learning to write a good grant is a life skill if you wish to join the academy, as it were.

parting advice:

- do not alienate or try to bamboozle the panel. They will know if you are repurposing an NRSA.