Charles A. King Trust Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Program

Office Hours
January 16th, 2024, 11AM ET

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Health Resources in Action®
Advancing Public Health and Medical Research

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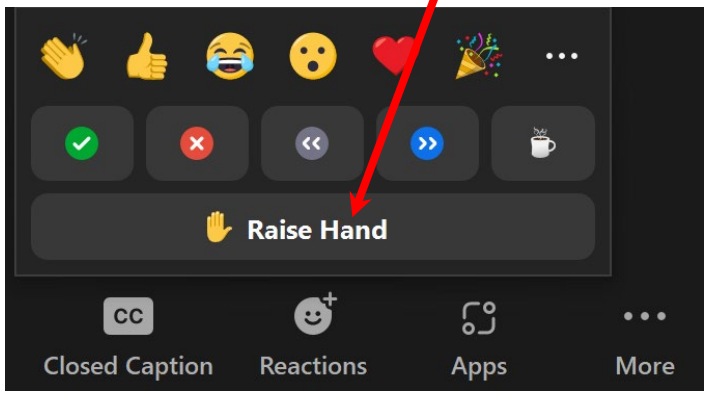
- Please mute yourself when not speaking
- To speak, use the "**raise hand**" feature
  - ➢ Wait for the moderator to invite you to speak
  - ➢ Do NOT "jump in" or interrupt others



- Use the **"chat"** feature
  - ➢ To comment or ask/answer questions
  - ➢ To participate in writing and not verbally
  - ➢ *The moderator might ask you to unmute, but you are welcome to decline!*

Agenda

- Program Overview and Application Requirements
  - Program Mission & Research Focus
  - Program Overview
  - Changes from 2023
  - Eligibility
  - Budget Guidance
  - Review Criteria
- Lessons Learned and Helpful Tips
  - Pitfalls to Avoid
  - Application Tips
- Q & A

Program Mission

The Charles A. King Trust was established in 1936 to "**support and promote the investigation of human disease and the alleviation of human suffering through improved treatment.**"

The program provides funding to postdoctoral fellows and clinical scientists in the mid to late stages of their research training to help them achieve their goals of becoming independent investigators in biomedical research.

Diverse and Inclusive Research:

To promote and enable diversity in biomedical research, the King Trust is committed to awarding researchers *of all backgrounds*, including racial/ethnic groups that are underrepresented in science. The King Trust seeks to support the next generation of scientific leaders who are dedicated to creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive research environment, and who contribute to the wider research community and promote positive research culture.

Research Focus

There are two separate, but linked programs:

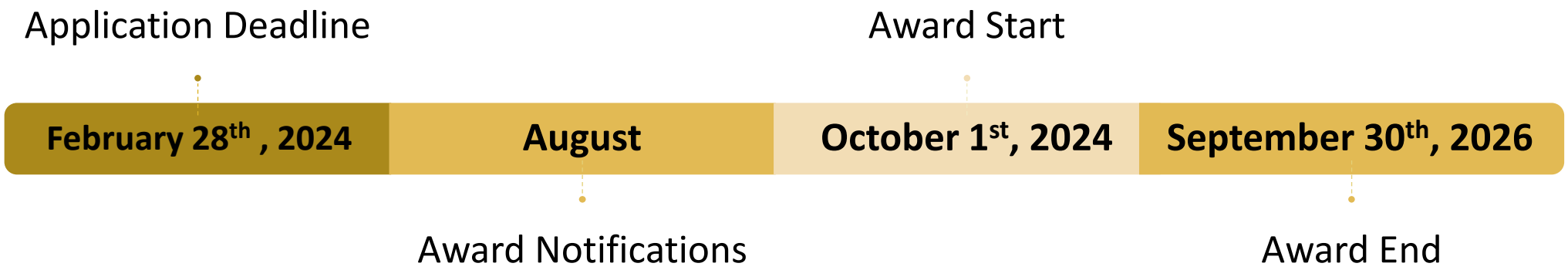
- King Trust Basic and Preclinical Science Award Program
  - Proposals in the basic sciences seek to increase our understanding of the underlying biological processes relevant to human health and disease. Preclinical sciences seek to move findings from basic research towards clinical application.
  - This includes research projects involving animal, patient derived tissue or samples, or cell culture models seeking to understand basic science questions
- King Trust Clinical and Implementation Research Award Program
  - Clinical or implementation research funded by this program support *human* studies
  - Includes physiological research, behavioral science and health education research, translational research (the application of bench research to patient care), epidemiological research, health services and policy research, outcomes research, and research about healthcare delivery and population health, regardless of specialty or discipline.

Additional funding from the O'Brien Trust and Fortin Charitable Foundation supports research focused on **cancer or blindness** (not visual impairment).

Program Overview

Amount & Duration: Ranging from $194,100 to $215,000 total over 2 years (inclusive of 10% fringe allowance and flexible allowance of $25K per year, indirect costs not allowed)

Award Dates: Oct 1, 2023 – Sept 30, 2025



Changes from 2023 Program

Eligibility

- Allowance of applications from individuals with expiring NIH F awards

Review Criteria

- Updates so reviewer's take a more holistic approach to reviewing applicants

Letters of Recommendation

- Updates to Mentor's and other Letters of Recommendation
    - Length

Application Documents:

- Added requirement for Research and Career Development Plan

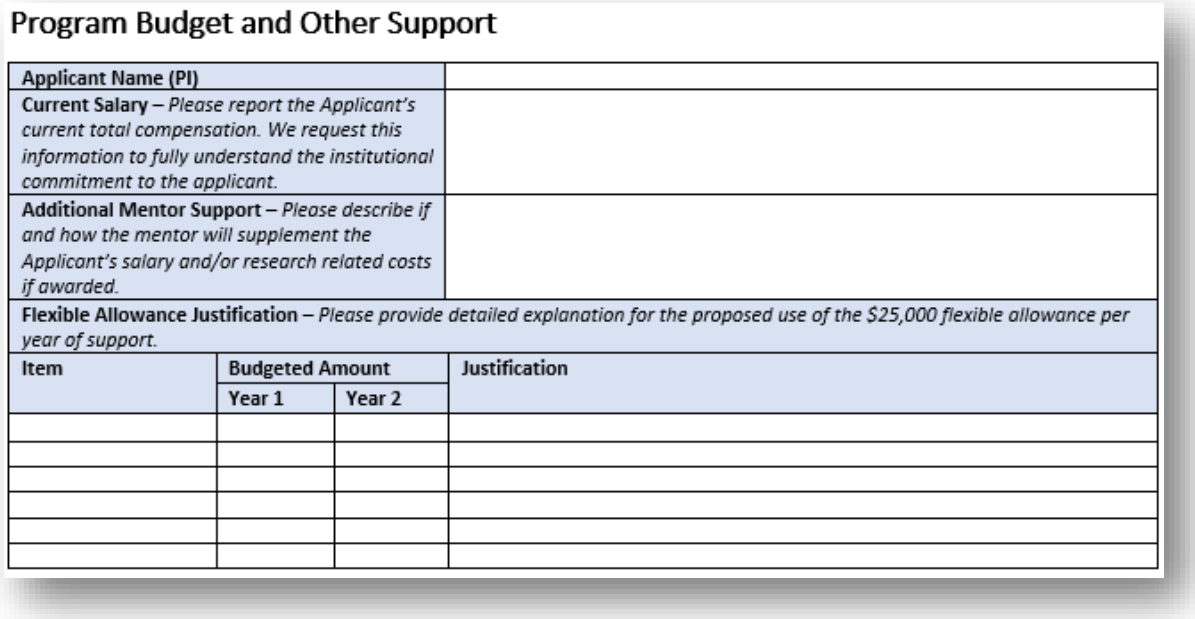
Eligibility

By October 1, 2024

- Postdoc (or equivalent) or clinician scientist with a doctoral degree (MD, MD/PhD, PhD, DO, DMD, PharmD, DPT…)
- Conducting mentored non-independent research in the states of **Massachusetts**.
- **Postdoc Research Experience (excluding pauses for extenuating circumstances):**
  - Without clinical training
    - 3-6 years full-time postdoctoral research experience
    - Commit 90% protected time to research
  - With clinical training
    - No more than 6 years full-time postdoctoral (or equivalent) research experience
    - Commit 70% protected time to research
  - Must have completed residency and clinical training. Award support may not overlap with fellowship support.
- **Publication:** By February 28th, must have at least one peer reviewed research article from postdoc work (co-author is fine). Submitted or in-press must be publicly available as a pre-print.
- Must apply under guidance of a Mentor (1 applicant per mentor)
- **Concurrent Funding:** Cannot hold concurrent Career Development Award, including NIH K, KL2 or other equivalent award at the time of application

Budget Guidance

- Flexible allowance of $25,000 per year for 2 years
- Funds can be used at the discretion of the Award Recipient for a variety of purposes:
  - E.g. research supplies, salary supplementation, lab technicians, travel, coursework, caregiver support, equipment, publication costs, study participants, and/or core services.
- Flexible allowance may not be used for indirect costs or institutional overhead (Rent, Telephone/Fax/Internet, etc...)



Program Budget and Other Support

Applicant Name (PI)			
Current Salary – *Please report the Applicant's current total compensation. We request this information to fully understand the institutional commitment to the applicant.*			
Additional Mentor Support – *Please describe if and how the mentor will supplement the Applicant's salary and/or research related costs if awarded.*			
Flexible Allowance Justification – *Please provide detailed explanation for the proposed use of the $25,000 flexible allowance per year of support.*			
Item	**Budgeted Amount**		**Justification**
	Year 1	**Year 2**	

Review Criteria

Research Proposal

- Contribute to understanding of causes of human disease to help improve treatment
- Originality, impact and creativity
- Hypothesis is novel and/or builds on current knowledge and references relevant literature
- Aims are well conceived and necessary to inform hypothesis.
- Research methodology, data collection, and analytical plan are feasible and appropriate to the proposals aims

Applicant

- Proposed work builds on applicant's prior research and has potential to contribute to professional training and growth towards independence.
- Career trajectory demonstrates increasing independence
- Applicant's commitment and contributions to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment, contributing to the wider research community, and promoting positive research culture.
- Applicant's experiences help build diverse STEM workforce

Research and Career Development Plan

- Includes relevant benchmarks to complete work
- Includes learning opportunities for skill development as appropriate
- Mentor's role in the Applicant's research and career development clearly outlined
- Relevant research dissemination, networking, and funding application opportunities outlined
- Applicant will have appropriate opportunities to supervise

Mentor and Support

- Mentor has experience mentoring or has built a team to enable success of the applicant in advancing their career.
- Mentor demonstrates commitment to supervise and train Applicant, and provide financial support necessary
- Training environment is sufficient to enable completion of proposed research
- Mentor speaks to importance of proposed research and how it will help Applicant secure independent role
- Letters of recommendation attest to the importance of the proposed research, and that the proposed work will complement and build upon the applicant's background in achieving their goals of becoming an independent investigator

Specific Quotes

- **Impact/Significance/Hypothesis:** “The proposal is largely technical in nature and could be strengthened by addressing why the work is important/significant or how the findings will advance scientific knowledge about the topic.”; “The proposal could be strengthened with more information about the overall biological question/goal and hypotheses”; “The applicant should clearly articulate the hypothesis within the proposal.”; “The rationale regarding the proposed assays and analyses should be provided to support the impact of the work.”
- **Approach/Methods:** “The proposal could be improved with further description of the number of experiments and statistical analyses.”; “The proposal could be strengthened by including more description regarding interpretation of the results and extrapolation to the larger biological process.”; “the proposal should mention methodologies, power calculations, or considerations of rigor and reproducibility”; “The experimental plan needs more details regarding expected results and alternative approaches.”; “The aims are largely dependent on the outcome of the previous one.”; “The proposal is exploratory in nature, and more rational is needed why these studies are relevant for the question at hand.”; “Rationale for why x would affect y is underdeveloped.”
- **Feasibility:** “A major concern is that too much work is being proposed and that each Aim may only be superficially addressed.”; “The applicant proposes to utilize XXX statistical analysis, however, this does not seem feasible given the number of participants/samples included in the project.”; “The applicant has proposed a large body of work to complete, however no mention is made regarding other support provided by laboratory personnel.”
- **Experience/Publications/Career Trajectory:** “The Applicant should clarify whether they have any experience with the proposed techniques, and if not, how they will learn.”; “The proposal could be improved by providing more explanation of how this work will help the Applicant transition into an independent career.“; “There is limited record of papers directly relevant to the proposed research so the proposal could be improved with some discussion of how limited experience will be addressed.”; “The applicant is a middle author on a publication with many co-authors so it is unclear what their role was in this study.”
- **Mentorship:** “The mentoring plan outlined should include more personalization and detailed description; potentially regarding how the current research will set the stage for future independence.”; “It would have been a good idea to enlist a co-mentor so that the Applicant is sure to get sufficient guidance.”; “The extent of involvement of the co-mentor is not fully delineated - it is unclear to what extent they will be involved and in what capacity.”; “It should be clearly outlined the new techniques and background(scientific field) the Applicant will be learning and why it is important for completion of the work and their research trajectory.”
- **LOS:** “The LOS could be improved by expanding upon the Applicant’s strengths, skills, and traits that would make them a standout leader as an independent investigator. The LOS could also be improved by directly attesting to the importance of the proposed research.”; “The other letters of reference could be improved with more personalized and extensive information.”
- **DEI:** “The DEI/STEM statement was fairly generic and could have been improved with more specific details.”

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Unclear impact/significance
- Feasibility of the approach, lack of detail, lack of pitfalls and alternate approaches
- Appropriate use of sample size and statistics
- Poor grantsmanship: jargon, abbreviations, no clear hypothesis
- Interdependent or exploratory Aims
- Relevance and rigor of publication record
- Unclear contribution to career development/training
- Lack of detailed and personalized mentoring plan
- Lack of experience or lack of plan to address gaps in experience
- Lack of detail in letters of recommendation

Application Tips

- Make sure your proposal reflects the review criteria and program goals
- Tell the story and provide explicit reasons and statements regarding why your approach is promising and helpful for your career trajectory. Recruit the right team: Include appropriate collaborations and/or shared mentorship if it benefits the project
- Include relevant preliminary data
- Be realistic (in timeline, budgets, methodologies, etc.)
- Avoid jargon and abbreviations; should be understandable to scientific generalists
- Be concise and clear (make it easy to read!)
- Point out pitfalls, include contingencies, mention sample sizes and statistics
- Seek feedback (internally, externally, and across disciplines)

Questions?

Program Website:
https://hria.org/tmf/king/

Contact Us:
KingAwards@hria.org