

Charles A. King Trust Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Program

Office Hours
January 19th, 2022, 11AM ET

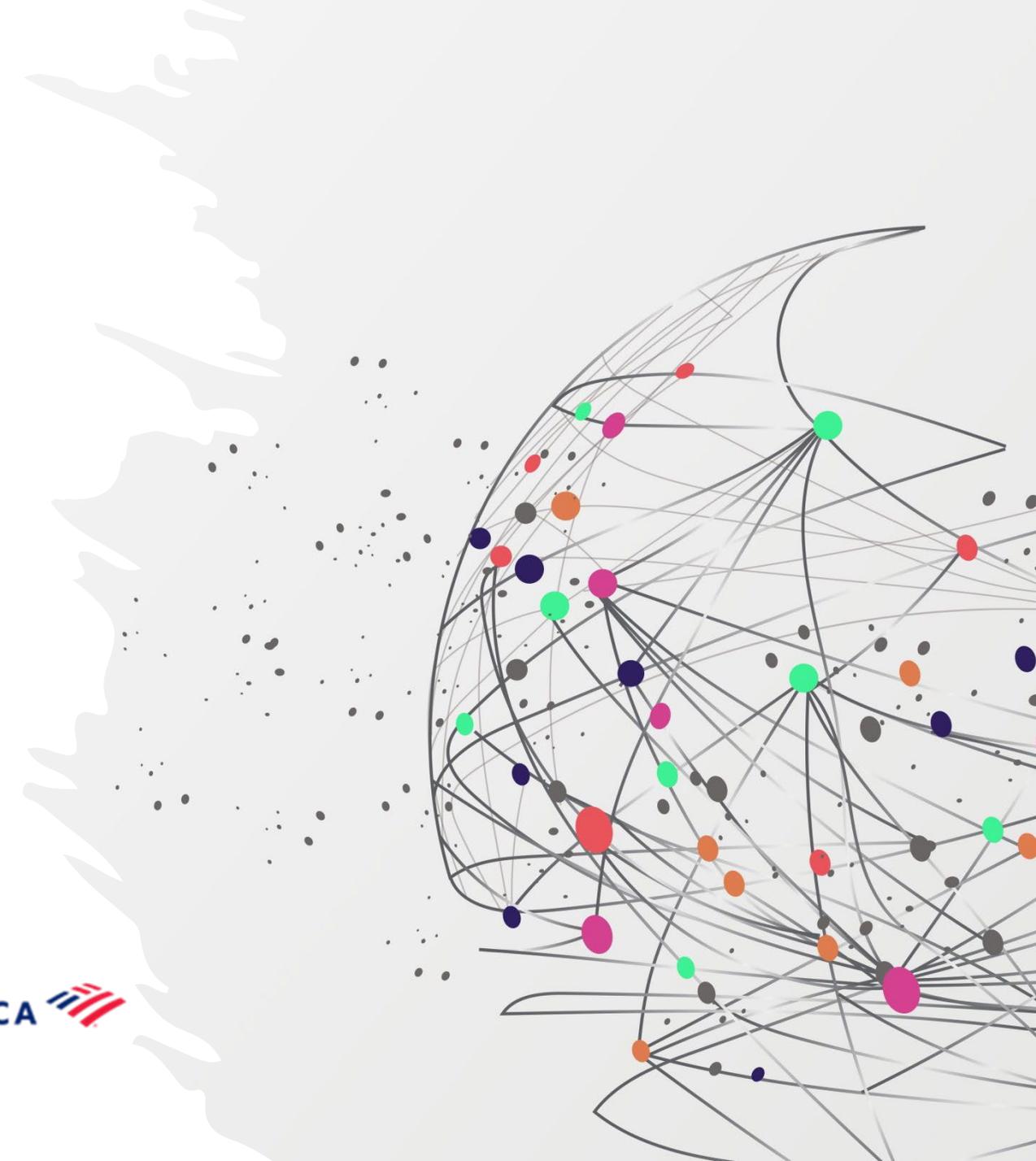
Lindsay Redman Rivera, PhD, Grants Officer

Kim Lezak, PhD, Managing Director



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Agenda

- Program Overview and Application Requirements
 - Program Mission & Research Focus
 - Program Overview
 - Changes from 2022
 - Eligibility
 - Review Criteria
- Lessons Learned and Helpful Tips
 - Budget Guidance
 - 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:

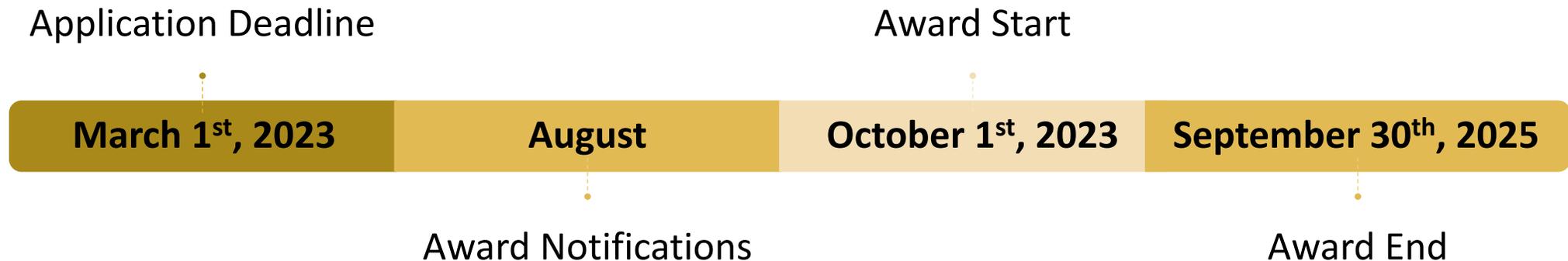
- King Trust Basic and Preclinical Science Award Program
 - Proposals in the basic sciences seek to increase our understanding of the underlying biological processes relevant to human health and disease. Preclinical sciences seek to move findings from basic research towards clinical application.
 - This 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: Ranking 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 2022 Program

Research Focus

- Research focus for both programs has been modified slightly

Eligibility

- Eligibility for those with clinical training has been modified (now based on research experience and not employment)

Funding

- Stipend and flexible allowance has increased significantly
- 10% allowance for Fringe

Application Documents:

- Applicant Eligibility, Research Experience, and Career Trajectory sections
- Contributions to Research Community and Promotion of Positive Research Culture
- Project Ownership Plan (Including a statement in the mentor's letter)
- Human Subjects Section
- Proposed budget for flexible allowance
- Other Support (including Applicant and Mentors Current and Pending Support)

Eligibility

By October 1, 2023

- Conducting mentored non-independent research in the states of **Massachusetts**.
- Doctoral degree (MD, MD/PhD, PhD, DO, DMD, PharmD, DPT...)
- Postdoc or clinician scientist
 - 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.
- By March 1st, must have at least one peer reviewed research article.
- Must apply under guidance of a Mentor
- Cannot hold concurrent Career Development Award, including NIH K, F, KL2 or other equivalent award at the time of application

Review Criteria

Research Proposal

- Originality, impact and creativity
- Hypothesis is novel and/or builds on current knowledge
- Proposal reviews the relevant literature
- Objectives are well conceived, realistic and important
- Research methodology, data collection, and analytical plan are feasible and appropriate to the proposals aims

Applicant

- Applicant's demonstrated competency and potential for an independent career in research that will contribute to the investigation of human disease
- Proposed work builds on applicant's prior research and has potential to contribute to applicant's professional training and growth towards becoming and independent researcher.
- Applicant's commitment to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment, contributing to the wider research community, and promoting positive research culture.

Mentor and Support

- Mentor's qualifications, degree of commitment to supervise and train the applicant during the research period, and strength of their letter of support
- 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.”
- **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.”
- **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.”
- **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.”; “It should be clearly outlined the new techniques and background(scintific 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