

POSTDOCTORAL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM (PDEP)

Proposal deadline:

January 14, 2021 (4:00 pm ET)

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KEY DATES

Grant application portal available	October 15, 2020
Application deadline	January 14, 2021 (4:00 pm ET)
Notice of award	By end of June 2021
Award start date	September 1, 2021
Award end date	August 30, 2024

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Burroughs Wellcome Fund is committed to fostering the development of the next generation of biomedical scientists and is strongly committed to supporting only degree-granting institutions to achieve this goal. The career development of young scientists has been a major funding theme at BWF. The continuing lag in advancement of underrepresented minority scientists is a significant problem for the scientific community. Despite several decades of federally supported programs, Americans from these minority populations continue to be underrepresented among Ph.D. recipients and in the Science & Engineering workforce. Contrary to popular belief, many well prepared underrepresented minority students—including people of Latino, Native-American, Pacific Island, and African-American descent—are interested in pursuing scientific or engineering careers. Many students with strong SAT scores, impressive grades, and success in high school honors math and science courses leave the college science pipeline, but the loss is disproportionately among women and minorities. Thus, factors other than school preparation, science aptitude, and interest must be responsible for the low achievement and low persistence of these subgroups of undergraduate and graduate Science & Engineering students. Identifying and mitigating these negative factors, then retaining well-educated students with Science & Engineering interests would improve the United States' ability to compete in today's global scientific community. (SCIENCE, 31 March 2006, Preparing Minority Scientists and Engineers, Michael Summers and Freeman Hrabowski).

For this reason, the Burroughs Wellcome Fund created the Postdoctoral Enrichment Program in 2012. BWF is committed to funding the next generation of scientists and researchers, thus we have an interest in advancing the careers of underrepresented minority postdoctoral fellows. The primary goal of the Postdoctoral Enrichment Program (PDEP) is to substantially enhance the postdoctoral training and experience of underrepresented minority junior scientists. Funds will be provided to support the following enrichment activities:

1. Activities for the postdoctoral fellow to enhance research productivity, e.g. workshops, courses, travel, collaborations, and training in new techniques
2. Activities for the postdoctoral mentor to increase the mentoring of PDEP fellows in university-based programs:
 - Career guidance of the underrepresented minority postdoctoral fellow
 - Research guidance that increases the productivity of the PDEP fellow
 - Attendance at one annual meeting of mentors hosted and/or sponsored by the Burroughs Wellcome Fund (BWF)
3. Participation in a peer network system of underrepresented minority postdoctoral scholars

POSTDOCTORAL ENRICHMENT AWARD

The Postdoctoral Enrichment Program (PDEP) provides a total of \$60,000 over three years to support the career development activities for underrepresented minority postdoctoral fellows in a degree-granting institution in the United States or Canada whose training and professional development are guided by mentors committed to helping them advance to stellar careers in biomedical or medical research. Generally, up to 15 awards will be granted for enrichment activities annually. This grant is meant to supplement the training of postdocs whose research activities are already supported. It is not a research grant.

The program provides a total of \$60,000 over three years as follows:

Year one: \$20,000 will be granted to support enrichment activities of the postdoctoral fellow (\$10,000 for research supplies or equipment uniquely required to enhance the postdoctoral fellow's research and \$10,000 for education and training, including for mentors in the research lab where the postdoctoral fellow is assigned.) The PDEP award cannot be used to support salary expenses or indirect costs. (Refer to "Terms of Grant" for information on indirect costs and other requirements for use of funds.)

Year two: \$20,000 (same allocation as year one)

Year three: \$20,000 will be granted to help the postdoctoral fellow advance research efforts towards the professoriate. The funds must be used to develop independent, innovative areas of research.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants for the Postdoctoral Enrichment Award:

- must have no more than 36 months of postdoctoral research experience (in a research laboratory) at the time of application and not be more than 5 years from his/her Ph.D.
- must be nominated by a qualified mentor at the degree-granting institution where the applicant will conduct the postdoctoral/fellowship training. Applications must be approved by an official responsible for sponsored programs (generally from the grants office, office of research, or office of sponsored programs) at the degree-granting institution
- must have secured a postdoctoral position with funding (including support by the mentor's existing research grants) at a degree-granting institution in the United States or Canada and must begin the postdoctoral position on or by the designated award commencement date
- must be underrepresented minorities (i.e. American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Hispanic, or Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander)
- must be citizens of the United States or Canada (at the time of application)
- must devote at least 75% of time to research

Individual underrepresented minority postdoctoral fellows conducting biomedical or medical research are eligible to apply. The program targets postdoctoral fellows with Ph.D.s in the biomedical or medical sciences. Applicants with M.D. degrees who have secured a postdoctoral research appointment beyond clinical fellowship will be considered for this program. DDS, DVM, and PharmD candidates may be eligible, but should contact BWF prior to applying. Proposals in health services research or involving large-scale clinical trials are ineligible.

IMPORTANT NOTES

A person with more than 36 months of postdoctoral experience (in a research laboratory) at the time of application or with more than five years from his/her Ph.D. is not eligible for this award.

The PDEP award can only be made to degree-granting institutions in the U.S. or Canada. Institutional Internal Revenue Service determination letter of non-profit status may be requested by BWF staff if said letter is not on file in our database.

A qualified mentor is required for the PDEP. It has been documented that minorities are less likely to enter and remain in science and engineering when they lack mentors and role models. Mentors are expected to provide a letter of nomination with the proposal and the mentor's commitment to the applicant's career is important. Mentors of funded PDEP awardees may be requested to attend a mentoring workshop. The mentor must explicitly state how the postdoctoral fellow's stipend is being supported since the PDEP award cannot be used to support salary expenses. Please see the characteristics of a qualified mentor under "Selection Process" and expectations of mentors under "Terms of the Award."

SELECTION PROCESS

Selection of award recipients is made by a scientific advisory committee with final approval by the Burroughs Wellcome Fund Board of Directors. Generally, up to 15 Postdoctoral Enrichment Program (PDEP) awards will be made annually. The committee will use the following criteria to identify PDEP fellows who are innovative and committed to research. The award will provide funding to support and advance the PDEP fellow and support clear articulation of the vision and philosophy of advancing his/her career.

Qualifications of PDEP Applicant

- PDEP fellows with strong Ph.D. achievement and actively conducting research in the biomedical and medical areas

Characteristics of Proposed Mentor

- Capacity, track record, and commitment to advancing the careers of young scientists
- Willingness to participate in workshops to understand expectations of the award and a commitment to its goals (see Eligibility and Terms of the Award)
- Publications, training, and research background

Characteristics of Proposed Research Laboratory

- Appropriateness of facilities including laboratory, classroom, and residential spaces where the PDEP fellow is assigned
- Clear indication of adequate equipment and facilities for work being proposed for PDEP fellows. If additional equipment is being requested, an explanation of why the equipment is required.

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO PREPARE AND SUBMIT A COMPLETE PROPOSAL

Application Process

Interested candidates who meet the eligibility criteria will need to submit one online proposal through BWF's Internet Grant Application Module (IGAM) by January 14, 2021 4:00 pm ET. The proposal submission site or grant application portal will be available by October 15, 2020.

The proposal includes:

- Applicant information
- Signature Form
- Personal Statement
- Lay Abstract
- CV from the applicant
- Project Plan
- Budget
- CV of Mentor
- Confidential Letter of Support from Mentor

All communications will be made through email.

BWF does not provide critiques or written comments of unfunded proposals.

How to Submit a Proposal

First complete the eligibility quiz to determine if you are eligible to apply. If applicant meets the eligibility criteria, they will be allowed to access the application form.

To begin a proposal submission use this link: [proposal](#)

To return to a proposal already in progress you must use this link: [saved proposal](#)

It is recommended that applicants bookmark this page to return to a proposal in progress. Using the first link of the two immediately above will return you to the eligibility quiz.

Proposal Elements

A complete proposal consists of fields submitted through the online IGAM application plus requested attachments uploaded as PDFs into the grant application system. In addition, a confidential letter is requested from the postdoc's mentor. The detailed components of the complete proposal are shown below. Note that it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the confidential letter is submitted by the deadline due date. An application will not be considered complete without this confidential letter from the mentor.

Online proposal form – available through IGAM
(see previous links):

- Applicant (postdoc) information
- Applicant (postdoc) demographics
- Nominating institution information
- Contact information for the mentor, department chair, and signing official
- Proposal information
- Lay abstract
- Letter from mentor

PDF Attachments

Prepare in advance the following required documents to be uploaded as two PDFs in the following manner. Note where templates are provided:

[Download Forms and Templates](#)

1. Signature Page as an individual PDF document (template form provided)

2. As one combined PDF in the following order:

a) Personal Statement (one page)

Describes who you are, your long-term career goals, and how this award will support those goals. Include any mentoring or outreach activities you provide to others. Provide specific examples of your personal experience in navigating the STEM pipeline as an under represented minority to include any contributions you've made to initiatives designed for increasing diversity in STEM. Provide personal testimony of lived experiences and challenges faced.

b) Lay Abstract (one page)

Describe the proposed work, including specific aims, in a scientific abstract that is understandable to a multidisciplinary group of scientific reviewers. It is important that your submitted lay abstract be written generally as evidence of good communication across various audiences. The separate lay abstract within the project plan can be provided with a general scientific audience in mind. This can be the same lay abstract you will also incorporate within the online application. [Here](#) are some examples of lay abstracts you may find useful.

c) Curriculum vitae of postdoctoral applicant (up to five pages) (NIH biosketch allowed)

d) Project Plan (up to three pages including references)

There is no set template for the project plan. The plan should describe:

1. Rationale, vision, and summary of proposed research
2. Training plan and how this relates to career goals
3. Organizational Capacity: experience, facilities and administrative support available at proposed research institution

e) Budget and Budget Justification (one page for the budget and one page for the budget justification)

The budget should cover year one of the proposal. A one-page budget justification for year one should be included as well. This award cannot be used to provide the postdoc's salary or purchase reagents or equipment commonly found in the mentor's laboratory. Requests for equipment should be justified appropriately.

f) CV of Mentor (up to five pages) (NIH biosketch allowed)

Include graduate and post-graduate trainees from mentor's laboratory and their current position.

Confidential Letter of Support from Mentor (confidential blind letter, no more than two pages)

The letter should describe intended contributions, including commitment of facilities, staff, and funds. The mentor must include how the postdoc's salary will be supported. Mentor should include a plan for training and mentoring the applicant. (See Characteristics of Proposed Mentor under Selection Process.) It is key that the letter provide information on the postdoctoral fellow's experiences.

The letter is to remain confidential and should not be viewed by the applicant. From within the application system, applicants can send their mentors a link to upload the letter. Letters must be uploaded as a PDF file prior to 4 p.m., January 14, 2021 deadline (ET).

It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure the letter is submitted on time.

Applicant instructions to obtain confidential mentor letter:

1. Send an email to your mentor from within the online system (Recommender tab) requesting this letter. *Note that although this tab says recommender, the letter is from your mentor. No additional letters from other supporters are required.*
2. To send the email, click on the Recommenders tab and enter the mentor's name and email. Be certain the "send e-mail" check box is clicked next to the name. Click send.

3. An email will pop-up with standard language. It is recommended by BWF that you change the language to reflect that this is not a standard recommendation letter, but rather a letter of nomination from the mentor. Once the mentor logs into the system, they will see instructions on what to include in the letter.
4. The email will contain a link that the mentor must use to log into the system and upload his/her letter to your proposal.
5. The link is specific and unique to your application and the letter writer.
6. Once the letter has been uploaded by your mentor, it will be displayed as an uploaded file on the "Attachments" tab in the applicant's online application.
7. Letters are confidential and should not be viewed by the applicant. You will only be able to see that the letter has or has not been uploaded to your application.

Note: Mentor letters sent separately or after the application due date will not be accepted.

Mentor instructions to submit confidential letter:

- Complete your letter offline using any standard word-processing software. The letter should describe the intended contributions, including commitment of facilities, staff, and funds. The mentor letter must include how the postdoc's salary will be supported. The mentor should include a plan of training and mentoring for the applicant. The letter is limited to two pages. Please include the letter on official university letterhead, including a signature block.
- Convert the document to a PDF file. Save the letter as a .pdf on your system.
- Return to the applicant's email request and click on the web link which will take you to a log-in page on BWF's grant application system. Log in using the same email address at which you received the request from the applicant. Retain this log-in information in the event you wish to "reload" a revised letter at a later date.

- Select the Title: "Letters from Mentor" from the drop down list provided on the page.
- "Browse" to select the letter from your system which will populate the "File Name" field.
- Click the "Upload" button.
- Click the "Finished" button.
- View the acknowledgment thanking you for your submission.
- If you have problems with the email link, copy and paste the entire link into your web browser. Be certain you are entering the correct email address to log in to the site.
- Once your letter has been uploaded, the applicant will be able to see whether or not your letter has been submitted, but cannot view the content of the letter.
- An application CANNOT BE SUBMITTED until the mentor letter has been uploaded and attached to the application by the grant deadline.

If the mentor would like to upload a revised letter:

- Retrieve the initial email and web link originally provided to you by the applicant.
- Using your same email address, log in and access the web page to upload a confidential letter.
- Check the "Remove" box next to the html link for the initial letter.
- Click the "Remove" button.
- "Browse" for the revised letter (.pdf file) on your system.
- Click "Upload."
- Click the "Finished" button.
- View the acknowledgment that the letter has been submitted.

Submission Process

Upload the requested files on the “Attachments” tab of the online application. Click the “Review Your Application” on the Attachments tab to see if any errors are identified in your application. All information must be provided before the “SUBMIT” button is available. Click the “SUBMIT” button to transmit the application. An automated message will confirm that the application was successfully submitted.

Proposals will not be accepted after 4 pm EST on January 14, 2021. The online application system shuts down automatically at the deadline and the SUBMIT button will no longer be available. Plan to submit your application well in advance of the grant deadline to allow adequate time to troubleshoot any issues. NO EXCEPTIONS OR EXTENSIONS WILL BE GRANTED.

After the deadline, applicants with incomplete proposals and those not adhering to instructions will be disqualified without prior notice.

Only proposals submitted through BWF online application website IGAM will be accepted.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the confidential mentor letter has been uploaded to their application and submitted by the deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Questions?

Eligibility inquiries should be directed in advance to BWF program staff by contacting:

Alfred Mays, Senior Program Officer
amays@bwfund.org, 919-991-5103

Tiffanie Taylor, Senior Program Associate
ttaylor@bwfund.org, 919-991-5116

TERMS OF THE GRANT/USE OF GRANT FUNDS

Indirect costs may not be charged against BWF grants.

Awards are made to the degree-granting institutions on behalf of the award recipients. The Postdoctoral Enrichment Program (PDEP) award provides a total of \$60,000 over three years as outlined below to support the development of a PDEP fellow at a degree-granting institution. Applicants at affiliated graduate and medical schools, hospitals and research institutions in the United States or Canada must apply through the degree-granting institution. Individual PDEP fellows conducting biomedical or medical research are eligible to apply. Award recipients must commit 75% of their time to research.

The institutions are responsible for disbursing the funds and for maintaining adequate supporting records and receipts of expenditures. Indirect costs may not be charged against the awards.

Award recipients must provide BWF with an annual progress report detailing their progress. Institutions must provide an annual financial report. Both reports must be submitted (on forms that will be provided) by November of each award year. Continued funding will depend on both the timely submission of these reports and their favorable review by BWF and its program advisory committee.

Award recipients may obtain funds from other sources for research in the same or similar areas as that conducted under these grants, so long as there is no conflict with meeting the terms of BWF's award.

This award cannot be used to provide the postdoctoral fellow's salary or to purchase reagents or equipment commonly found in the mentor's laboratory. The award is under the control of the award recipient and may be used flexibly for career development activities as outlined below.

Year one: \$20,000 will be granted to support enrichment activities of the postdoctoral fellow (\$10,000 for research supplies or equipment uniquely required to enhance the postdoctoral fellow's research and \$10,000 for education and training, including for mentors in the research lab where the postdoctoral fellow is assigned.)

Year two: \$20,000 (same allocation as year one)

Year three: \$20,000 will be granted to help the postdoctoral fellow advance research efforts towards the professoriate. The funds must be used to develop independent, innovative areas of research.

BWF acknowledges that postdoctoral fellows may move to new institutions. Awards may not be transferred for another postdoctoral position. Award recipients who change institutions for another postdoctoral position may take with them any equipment or supplies purchased under the award.

Scientific publications or presentations that result from these awards must acknowledge the awardee's receipt of a Burroughs Wellcome Fund Postdoctoral Enrichment Program Award. Copies of journal articles and other publications should be sent to BWF along with the annual progress report.

Awardees should follow their institutions' patent, copyright, and intellectual property policies regarding discoveries that result from research conducted under these awards. BWF expects the appropriate federal, state, and local guidelines with regard to scientific misconduct are in place and enforced at all institutions with which BWF awardees are affiliated.

Awardees should share scientific findings in a timely manner via the standard means of scientific communication, including publications and/or presentations in scientific forums. BWF will not retain any rights to published results or patents that result from the research.

The awards will begin on September 1, 2021.

Expectations for Mentors

A qualified mentor is required for the PDEP. It has been documented that minorities are less likely to enter and remain in science and engineering when they lack mentors and role models. In most science and engineering disciplines, the percentage of underrepresented minorities among faculty recently hired is not comparable to that of recent minority Ph.Ds. and is far below that of recent bachelor degree recipients. This results in fewer minority faculty to act as role models for minority students. (A National Analysis of Minorities in Science and Engineering Faculties at Research Universities, Nelson and Brammer, January 2010). This program is designed to encourage innovative scientists with broad ranging backgrounds in the biomedical and medical sciences and with experiences in working with postdoctoral fellows to consider serving as mentors.

BWF is in the beginning phase of developing a mentor workshop independently of a prior collaboration with the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. The workshop may consist of online modules and culminate in a face-to-face meeting. Details will be provided with ample notice and PDEP mentors will be strongly encouraged to participate in a minimum of one mentor workshop within the first two years of the active award period. Discussions and topics will include considerations of the cultural barriers that exist for underrepresented minority postdoctoral fellows within the scientific community and the value effective mentoring can have on mentee career development and progression.