

## Policy and Guidelines for the Pulmonary Hypertension Association's Aldrighetti Research Award for Young Investigators

### I. Research Award Description

The focus of the Aldrighetti Research Award is to support the career of a young investigator interested in research in pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH) who is likely to make a strong and sustained impact in PAH research. Proposals should investigate the pathophysiology of PAH, toward elucidating mechanistic pathways and identifying novel therapeutic targets or biomarkers in adult or pediatric pulmonary hypertension. The project should have potential applicability to human pulmonary vascular diseases. Investigators are encouraged to connect through PHA's professional network, PH Clinicians and Researchers, during their research.

Sponsorship Support provided by Actelion Pharmaceuticals, Inc. through a partnership with the Pulmonary Hypertension Association.

### II. Funding Amount

Awards may be approved for up to a two (2) year period. Funding of up to \$40,000/year may be requested. Indirect costs are not allowable.

### III. Eligibility

- Candidates must be U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or non-residents working in a U.S.-based laboratory. Applicants who are not U.S. citizens but are currently based in the U.S. must hold a Visa that spans the project period of the grant.
- Applicants must have completed their primary research training (Ph.D. or sub-specialty fellowship) by December 1, 2021.
- Applicants must have a firm commitment from their home institution for a faculty position.
- Partnerships between junior and senior investigators are strongly encouraged, particularly for new investigators who are within one to five years of the completion of their scientific or medical training.
- Applicants must be **young investigators** as defined as:
  - Within 12 years of terminal degree (e.g. MD, PhD), please note that sub-specialty training does not count
  - Never having received any non-mentored grants  $\geq$  \$100,000 per year for at least 2 years
  - Exceptions (not related to sub-specialty training) may be considered if there are extenuating circumstances (such as parental or military leave), please send an explanation to [Research@PHAssociation.org](mailto:Research@PHAssociation.org) before applying.

- Simultaneous submission of grants with scientific overlap is allowed, but if multiple applications are funded, then the applicant must notify the Pulmonary Hypertension Association within one month of formal notification of award. The Research Committee of PHA's Scientific Leadership Council will assess the degree of overlap. In the case of significant scientific overlap, the applicant will have to choose between the Aldrighetti Research Award and the other grant. Budgetary overlap is not allowed. Applicants who hold active career development grants (e.g. K award) are eligible to receive PHA funding, but the project should be scientifically different from the already funded award.

#### **IV. Review and Award**

- All applications are evaluated by PHA's Scientific Leadership Council (SLC) Research Committee whose recommendations are reviewed by the PHA's Board of Trustees. Funding of awards is based on the priority score awarded to each application and the recommendations of the SLC Research Committee.
- Funding decisions are based on:
  - The relevance of the proposed study to advance PAH research and improve patient outcomes
  - The scientific and technical merit of the proposed research
  - The feasibility and impact of the proposed research
  - The applicant's research accomplishments and potential for a successful independent research career
  - The applicant's commitment to, or intent to pursue, a research career in pulmonary hypertension
  - Quality of the institutional environment regarding the PH research program and laboratory resources and equipment
- Primary causes for assigning low priority scores to applications during review include:
  - Insufficient information or documentation
  - Inadequate statement of hypothesis, experimental design or methods
  - Failure of the applicant to demonstrate awareness of and plans for coping with key problems and pitfalls associated with the proposed research
  - Failure of the applicant to describe potential relevance of the proposed study to PAH
  - Failure of the applicant to document the necessary skills or training to accomplish the goals of the proposal
  - Failure of the applicant to meet all of the eligibility criteria
- An application will be awarded on the basis of individual and institutional merit. The award will not be transferable to another individual or institutions unless previously approved by the Pulmonary Hypertension Association.

#### **V. Submission Information**

- Applicants may only submit one (1) application for the Aldrighetti Research Award
- **Application deadline: Tuesday, March 15, 2022 by 5:00 PM (Eastern)**
- Submit online through proposalCENTRAL: <https://proposalcentral.com/>
- General Timeline:

- Application Deadline \_\_\_\_\_ March 15, 2022  
Review \_\_\_\_\_ April 2022  
Notification to Applicants \_\_\_\_\_ May 2022
- Project Awarded \_\_\_\_\_ by June 30, 2022

## VI. Full Application Guidelines

Applications must be submitted online at proposalCENTRAL: <https://proposalcentral.com/>

### Documents should be typed using:

- Font: Times New Roman 12 or Arial 11
- Margins: No less than a half inch on each side

Log-in at proposalCENTRAL: <https://proposalcentral.com/>

First-time applicants must register to create a username and password for proposalCENTRAL and will need to complete a profile online before applying. If you are registered and cannot remember your password, click on the “**Forgot Your Username/Password?**” link below the “**Application Login**” fields.

Award opportunities, including this Request for Applications (RFA), are listed on the opening screen, but you must be logged in first to see them.

Select the gray tab labeled “**Grant Opportunities**” found in the upper right-hand side of the page.

Locate the listing for the “Aldrighetti Research Award” program. Click on the “**Apply Now**” button in the column on the far right to open the application form.

Applicants may stop at any point but must click the “**Save**” button before exiting in order to save their work. When logging in to continue, click on the blue tab, “**Proposals**”, and then the “**Edit**” button.

The following sections are listed in the navigation menu to the left of the application screen. Click on each section and follow the directions:

1. **Title Page:** Enter the title of your project, indicate whether the Principal Investigator (PI) is an investigator new to PHA.
2. **Download Templates & Instructions:** Download the available templates applicable to the project, fill them out and upload them when completed. Templates available include:
  - a. Biographical Sketch(es) for Applicant and Key Personnel
  - b. Research Plans
  - c. Budget Period Detail
  - d. Budget Justification

e. Resources Available

- 3. Enable Other User to Access this Proposal:** Complete this section online if you wish to designate access to another individual, such as an assistant who has registered on proposalCENTRAL. Enter the email address of the individual and in the “**Permissions**” column, use the pulldown menu to select the type of access you wish to give. Please note that only delegates who are granted “**Administrator**” rights can submit applications on behalf of the applicant. Click on “**Accept Changes**”.
- 4. Applicant:** If a profile was completed upon registration, the fields in this section will already be populated with the information entered in your Professional Profile. If you need to make any changes, click the “**Edit Professional Profile**” button, and follow the instructions. If a profile was not completed, enter the required information, and click “**Save**”.
- 5. Institution & Contacts:** If a profile was completed upon registration, the applicant’s institution will be preloaded as Lead Institution. If a profile was not completed, enter the required information and click “**Save**”. Be sure to use the full legal name of the institution.
- 6. Biographical Sketch(es) of Key Personnel** (template available online)  
Complete and upload an NIH Biographical Sketch for all key project personnel, beginning with the Applicant. International applicants can upload a biographical sketch that is equivalent in content to the NIH template provided. Key personnel are defined as any individual with an advanced degree that will play an instrumental role in the accomplishment of the research project.) Do not exceed five (5) pages per person.
- 7. Abstracts/Relevance**  
In the space provided online for abstracts, provide a statement of no more than 2,000 characters (including spaces) explaining the subject of the research proposal and how it will advance PAH research and how the research may lead to improved patient outcomes. Two different abstracts are required, as follows:

  - General Audience Abstract: This statement will be used to inform the non-scientific public of the nature of this work. Applicants should not include any confidential or proprietary information, including intellectual property, in the lay abstract.
  - Scientific Abstract: This statement will be used to inform the scientific community.
- 8. Future Plans**  
In the space provided online for Future Plans under the Abstracts/Relevance section, provide a statement describing the desired future direction of this research after funding period and how this award will contribute to your research career development.
- 9. Research Plans** (10-page limit)  
In this section, upload the completed downloaded template in PDF format. Application with Research Plans exceeding this page limit will not be reviewed. Type the PI's name in the space

available in the header of the document. The template available will track page numbers at the bottom.

Research Plan should include sufficient information to permit effective review without reference to previous applications. Information should be presented in a clear and concise manner, while being specific and informative.

- A. Hypothesis and Specific Aims:** State concisely and realistically the intent of the proposed research and the hypothesis to be tested. Describe the experimental paradigm. Do not exceed one page.
- B. Background and Significance:** Briefly describe the background leading to the present application. Critically evaluate existing knowledge and specifically identify the gaps that the project is intended to fill. Concisely state the importance and rationale of this research by relating the specific aims to longer-term objectives. If the aims are accomplished how will this affect the scientific field? Where will these studies lead in developing a larger research program? In addition, describe the relationship of the proposed work to your long-term career goals.
- C. Preliminary Results:** If applicable, provide a detailed discussion of any pertinent preliminary results. Any key figures and legends should be of sufficient quality and size to be evaluated by the reviewer. Preliminary data may help the reviewers in assessing the likelihood of the success of the proposed project. Include in your references any publications, manuscripts accepted for publication, patents, or other printed materials that have resulted from preliminary studies.
- D. Experimental Design and Methods:** Provide a detailed discussion of the experimental design and methods to be used to accomplish the specific aims. Describe the protocols, including methods for new techniques, and explain potential advantages over existing methodologies. Include how the data will be collected, and analyzed, and describe potential problems or limitations. This section must be written so that reviewers can evaluate the scientific questions, the experimental design, and the likelihood that the experiments will produce interpretable results. Include a tentative timetable showing how you will prioritize the work. Clearly identify collaborations with other investigators at the same or other institutions.
- E. Literature Cited (no page limit):** References should be numbered in the sequence that they appear in the text at the end of the Research Plan. Each citation must include the names of authors, title, the name of the journal or book, volume number, page number and year of publication. Recommended format: "New England Journal of Medicine" style in EndNote and "Annals of Internal Medicine" in Reference Manager.

#### **10. Budget Justification:**

The downloaded Budget Justification form will need to be completed and uploaded into proposalCENTRAL. Please note that indirect costs are not permitted.

#### **11. Resources Available:**

List the resources that you have available to you that will be needed to complete your project. Describe the resources, facilities, and equipment available at your institution that will

be used for this project, such as laboratory, clinical, animal, computer, office, etc. Describe how the resources will contribute to the successful completion of your project. Provide any additional information about the environment, including any support services available that will be utilized. Please note that the limit for this section is three (3) pages.

**12. Organization Assurances:**

PHA requires, as applicable, that all U.S.-based awardees obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals for human subject research, Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) approval for recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid research, and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval for animal research. Copies of these approvals, if available at the time the application is submitted, must be uploaded with the application as appendices. PHA will not release payments to awardee institutions until these documents are received.

**13. Verification of Applicant Institution's Tax Status (upload as PDF documents)**

A copy of the applicant institution's current W-9 and 501(c)3 letter, or other documentation verifying its federal tax status will need to be submitted for the Award to be issued.

**14. Letters of Support/Reference:**

Applicants are responsible for providing the name and email address of two references who can provide a letter of recommendations. Letters of recommendation are usually letters from someone not directly involved in the project but who can emphasize its importance, institutional leaders (e.g., division director, chair, dean), who can highlight the applicant's commitment, or a mentor.

**15. Invite Referees to submit Letters of Support/Reference through proposalCENTRAL:**

Letters of Support/Reference must be submitted electronically ONLY. To "invite" Referees, go to the "Letters of Reference" section of the online application, and enter the email addresses of the individuals you have asked to submit letters. This will generate automated emails (with instructions) sent to each Referee through the proposalCENTRAL website.

The applicant should inform Referees to submit the letters at least one (1) week prior to the application deadline. *The letters of recommendation are due at the time of the full application deadline.*

**16. Letters from Collaborators:**

Letters from collaborators are optional and may be included in addition to the two (2) Letters of Support/Reference. You may include as many letters from collaborators as you would like.

Letters uploaded to proposalCENTRAL should not be password protected or otherwise encrypted. Such encryption will cause errors in assembling a single-print PDF of the application. The applicant should inform the individuals writing letters to not include password protection on their documents.

**17. Appendices (upload materials as PDF documents, if applicable)**

Appendices are restricted to the following three (3) categories:

- Certification of organization assurances (i.e. IRB, IACUC and IBC approvals), if applicable.
- Up to three (3) reprints of the applicant’s work relating to the general area of research in the proposal may be uploaded in PDF format.

**18. Signature Page**

After completing all the proposal sections, complete the signature page section on proposalCENTRAL. The Signature Page must be electronically signed by the applicant and the Authorized Institutional Official in proposalCENTRAL prior to submission. Co-investigators, if any, do not need to sign the Signature Page.

**19. Validate:** Upon completing the application, click on the “Validate” button on the main screen. Attend to any omissions/errors as prompted onscreen, and then click “Validate” again.

**20. Submit:** Click on the gray button with blue lettering labeled “submit.” PHA will not receive your application unless the “Submit” button is clicked.

**Confirmation:** Applicants will receive an e-mail confirmation from proposalCENTRAL directly that the Application was successfully submitted. This e-mail will be your only acknowledgement. If you do not receive this confirmation, please contact proposalCENTRAL immediately to ensure that your submission was submitted and processed.

**VII. Contact Information**

**For technical support with the online application:** proposalCENTRAL at pcsupport@altum.com or 800-875-2562 on weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Eastern)  
**For program/content information:** PHA at [Research@PHAssociation.org](mailto:Research@PHAssociation.org).