

NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE

CANCER RESEARCH TRAINING AWARD (CRTA)

Provisions

Qualifications

A.

1. Cancer Research Training Awards are for U.S. citizens or resident aliens.
2. Degree certification is required.

OR

For predoctoral students: Provide official documentation that the fellow is in good academic standing (cumulative grade-point average included) and is enrolled at least half time in high school, college/university or medical/graduate school. For doctoral degree candidates, students must provide official documentation that they have completed course requirements, passed qualifiers, and are formally recognized by the university as a doctoral degree candidate.

3. Applicants must be at least 16 years of age. For individuals under 18 years of age, parental consent is required.

4. Applicants are required to complete a physical examination as directed by the Occupational Medical Service, NIH. Details are provided under the Program Description, Part D. Qualifications.

B. Awards

1. The specific period is shown in the attached Award Notification Letter from the Lab/Branch/Office Chief.

Fellowship training is on a full-time basis. Initial appointments are for a minimum of two months and may be authorized for up to a two-year period. (Because of accounting requirements and appropriations law, all awards are made one year at a time, even when the initial commitment is intended for two years.)

2. Renewals are in one-year increments beyond the initial commitment, and are based on demonstrated progress in the training assignment and mutual agreement between the fellow, the appropriate sponsor, the Lab/Branch/Office Chief, and the Division Director.
3. For **bachelor, master, and doctoral degree candidates**, the CRTA is usually a two-year program **for any one category at the pre-doctoral level**. Students in any of the pre-doctoral categories may participate in the CRTA program for the lesser of 2 options: (1) as long as they remain in good academic standing, until they are awarded a degree OR (2) up to 5 years.

4. The TOTAL nontenured **postdoctoral** service time spent at NIH cannot generally exceed five years unless justified and approved in writing. The time spent in all postdoctoral mechanisms at NIH cannot exceed the maximum eight-year limitation.

C. Stipends and Benefits

1. Stipends and low option health insurance benefits are paid from NCI funds. Upon notification of the activation, the initial stipend check will be issued at the end of the first month of training. Checks are paid in arrears and electronically transferred by the Treasury Department (usually received by the 1st business day of each month) for direct deposit to fellows' designated financial institutions.
2. Fellows must be covered by adequate health insurance. An approved plan is available through the Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences (FAES) and enrollment must be completed within 30 days from arrival at NIH. Enrollment becomes effective on the date the fellow meets with FAES and all forms are completed by both parties. Existing insurance should not be canceled until fellows have met with FAES. Individuals must have at least a 3-month appointment to be eligible for coverage through the FAES. **Note:** Summer students must provide verification of health insurance coverage for the full extent of their fellowship award periods.

Funds are provided to FAES for individual or family low option insurance in addition to the regular stipend paid to the fellow. If the fellow desires the FAES high option insurance, the difference between low and high option coverage will be withheld from the stipend.

If enrolled in a private plan in the trainee's name, reimbursement to the fellow will be based on FAES low option coverage. NCI will also reimburse for any additional health insurance cost, if incurred, as a result of being covered under a spouse's plan and identified as a "family member", not to exceed the cost of the FAES low option coverage. Sufficient documentation verifying health insurance coverage and documenting health insurance costs are required for a non-FAES policy.

3. Tort Claims: It is the opinion of the DHHS Office of the General Counsel (OGC) that Fellows would be eligible for coverage under the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) (28 U.S.C. 2671 et seq.) for damages or injuries that arise from actions occurring within the scope of their assignment and while under the direct supervision of a Federal employee. The OGC opines that Fellows working under the close preceptorship of NIH employees would be considered employees for all purposes relating to liability. However, the ultimate decisions on issues of liability are made by the courts on a case-by-case basis. Should claims arise from the actions of CRTA Fellows acting within the scopes of their assignments, NIH would ask that they be defended by the Department of Justice as if they were Federal employees. Clinical procedures, therefore, should be performed under the direct supervision of an NCI attending physician in an NCI facility. Designated physicians must acquire patient-care privileges and credentialing as required.

4. At the discretion of the sponsoring Lab/Branch/Office and prior to relocation, fellows appointed for a period of 12 months or more, and their dependents, may be authorized transportation and reimbursement on a US carrier NTE \$3,000 in conformance with U.S. Government travel regulations. No return travel is authorized.

In addition, and also at the discretion of the Lab/Branch/Office Chief, other transportation allowances, including travel, shipment of household goods, and temporary storage (if necessary) may be permissible but must be authorized on NIH-2028 prior to relocation.

The total allowance for relocation expenses including transportation, shipment of household goods, and temporary storage cannot exceed \$3,000.

5. While at NIH, allowances to attend scientific meetings, field research visits, or for training directly related to the purpose of the fellowship, may be authorized. All requests must be initiated by the sponsor and must be submitted to the Administrative Office for approval in advance of the meeting/training and must be carried out in accordance with government regulations.

D. Deductions and Income Taxes

1. Cancer Research Training Awardees are not Government employees, and are, therefore, not eligible to participate in the Federal Employees Retirement System. Since fellows receive awards for training, neither Social Security nor Medicare is deducted from stipends.

Definitive determinations regarding Social Security obligations and coverage must be made by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Nevertheless, it is the opinion of the NIH Legal Advisor that Fellows would not be considered self-employed for purposes of Social Security Act coverage, and therefore need not make Social Security or Medicare payments on their own behalf.

2. Research fellowship training awards are subject to federal, state and local incomes taxes. Interpretation and implementation of the tax laws is the domain of the IRS and the courts. Awardees should consult their local IRS office about the applicability of the current tax code changes, taxability of fellowship stipends, and the proper steps to be taken regarding their tax obligations. Publication 17 is a useful resource for tax preparation guidance, and may be accessed through the IRS Home Page: <http://www.irs.gov/>
 - a. Fellows are required to file quarterly estimated federal and state income tax returns since no taxes are withheld from their stipends. Information on estimated tax procedures, forms and due dates can be found at <http://www.irs.gov/publications/p505/>

- b. The Office of Financial Management, Fellowship Payroll Office, annually prepares CRTA 1099G tax forms--the stipend is considered a taxable grant award by IRS--and sends appropriate income information to the IRS and to fellows at their home address of record.

E. Excused Absence

1. Paid Absence - Since fellows are not employees, they do not earn annual or sick leave. They are, however, excused on federal holidays. At the discretion of the sponsor, fellows may be excused for reasonable cause (such as short-term personal emergencies, ill health, vacation, and personal relaxation). An excused absence for the delivery of a baby or adoption may be granted with flexibility determined by the sponsor. Although stipend and health insurance coverage will continue for excused paid absences, the period of the fellowship award is not extended due to lost time.
2. Unpaid Absence - A break in the award without stipend may be approved by the sponsor with concurrence from respective Lab/Br/Office Chief. The fellow will personally pay for health insurance coverage which starts on the 1st day of the month of unpaid absence.

F. Outside Work

Approval of outside employment is at the discretion of the sponsor and the same guidelines as for NIH employees apply, provided the fellow is able to meet a minimum of 40 hours per week on his/her fellowship assignment. Fellows should submit a memorandum requesting approval of outside work through Division channels with final approval by the Division Director.

G. Publications and Patents

The publication and patenting of scientific discoveries by fellows are governed by the same policies as for other scientists employed or in training at NIH. Fellows must not provide outside organizations or individuals with information that could form the basis of intellectual property rights for the Government.

H. Termination of Award for Cause

Awards may be revoked in whole or in part by the Division Director in collaboration with the Executive Officer for the respective Intramural or Extramural Research Program, acting upon specific requests by the sponsor or Laboratory/Branch Chief, provided that the revocation does not include repayment of funds that participants have already earned. Awards may be terminated prior to their normal expiration date for serious personal or scientific misconduct.

Awards may also be terminated based on a finding that the Fellow has failed to comply with the terms and conditions of the award or to carry out the purpose for which it was made. Any termination proposal must provide an opportunity for the Fellow to make reply before a decision is rendered. Under this appointment, Merit Systems Protection Board

appeal rights are not conferred or applied since trainees are not considered Government employees.

Division must notify OFM immediately when an award is terminated for cause, to avoid the possibility of overpayment.

NOTE: Please sign, date, and return the Agreement to Provisions sheet marked "original". Retain the general provisions and sheet marked "copy" for your records.

For individual under 18 years of age, parental consent must be indicated on the Agreement to Provisions.

NIH is an Equal Opportunity Employer

Applicants will receive consideration without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, or disability. U.S. citizenship or permanent residency status is required.
