National Funding Sources

Our grads are some of the best in the world, and because of that, they deserve support. We’ve collected info on some of the most commonly applied for and awarded fellowships in our department and some advice on how to score them. Faculty in our department have collected successfully funded applications here:

**NIH F31**

**Due date:** 3 cycles/year due in April, August, & December

**Citizenship requirements:** US citizens/permanent residents

**Funding period:** Up to 5 years support

https://researchtraining.nih.gov/programs/fellowships/F31

**NSF GRFP**

**Due date:** Mid/late October

**Eligibility:** Within first/second year of graduate school. Only 1 submission is allowed once in grad school.

**Citizenship requirements:** US citizens/permanent residents

**Funding period:** Three years of financial support

**Funding amount:** Annual stipend of $34,000 and a cost of education allowance of $12,000 to the institution.

https://www.nsfgrfp.org

**USDA NIFA**

**Due date:** Mid-June

**Eligibility:** Research must be in a “Targeted Expertise Shortage Area” including animal and plant production, forest resource, human nutrition, etc.

**Funding period:** Three years of funding

https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/food-and-agricultural-sciences-national-needs-graduate-and-postgraduate

**DoD NDSEG**

**Due date:** Early December

**Eligibility:** Within first/second year of graduate school. Research must fall within one of the Broad Agency Announcements (BAAs)

**Citizenship requirements:** US citizens

**Funding period:** Three years of funding

**Funding amount:** Monthly stipend ($3,200), up to $1,200 a year in medical insurance, and full tuition

http://ndsegfellowship.org

**American Heart Association AHA**

**Due date:** Mid-August

**Eligibility:** Coursework must be complete. You must only be doing research – no teaching.

**Funding period:** One or two years of support

**Funding amount:** $25,320 per year, plus $4,200 per year for health insurance. $2,000 per year, in addition to the stipend. (No limit on any line item (travel, computer, equipment, etc.).

https://professional.heart.org/professional/ResearchPrograms/ApplicationInformation/UCM\_443316\_Predoctoral-Fellowship.jsp

**Ford Foundation**

**Due date:** Early December

**Eligibility:** Members of underrepresented groups in professorship dedicated to pursuing a career in teaching and research

**Funding period:** Three years of support

**Funding amount:** Annual stipend: $27,000

**Other perks:** An invitation to attend the Conference of Ford Fellows

http://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/fordfellowships/index.htm

**GEM Fellowship**

**Due date:** Mid-November

**Eligibility:** Minority students only

**Funding period:** Up to five years

**Funding amount:** $16,000 stipend in the first academic year of the GEM Fellowship.

GEM Member University provides a living stipend up to the 5th year of PhD program, equivalent to other funded doctorate students in the department as well as full tuition and fees at a GEM University Member.

**Other perks:** A minimum of one paid summer internship with a GEM Employer Member

http://www.gemfellowship.org/students/gem-fellowship-program/

**AAUW American Fellowship**

**Due date:** Early November

**Eligibility:** Women only. Must be in the final year of writing her dissertation. Coursework and preliminary exams must be complete.

**Citizenship requirements:** US citizens/permanent residents

**Funding amount:** $20,000 to offset living expenses during dissertation completion

https://www.aauw.org/resources/programs/fellowships-grants/current-opportunities/american/dissertation-fellowships/

**DoE Computational Science Graduate Fellowship**

**Due date:** Mid-January

**Eligibility:** First year graduate students

**Citizenship requirements:** US citizens/permanent residents

**Funding period:** Up to four years

**Funding amount:** A yearly stipend of $38,000, payment of full tuition and required fees during the appointment period (at any accredited U.S. university), and an annual $1,000 travel allowance

**Other perks:** 12-week practicum in one of 20 DOE facilities

https://www.krellinst.org/csgf/

**HHMI Gilliam Fellowship**

**Due date:** Early January; Requires University nomination (Sept/Oct)

**Eligibility:** Members of underrepresented groups in science

**Funding period:** Three years of support

**Funding amount:** Annual fellow stipend of $33,000, an institution allowance (in lieu of tuition and fees) of $10,000, a fellow educational allowance of $3,000, and an adviser allowance of $4,000 to support diversity and inclusion efforts at the graduate level

https://www.hhmi.org/science-education/programs/gilliam-fellowships-advanced-study

**Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Student Traineeship Award**

**Due date:** End of December

**Eligibility:** Project must focus on or relate to cystic fibrosis

**Funding amount:** One time award of $3,000 to be used for stipend support and/or research costs

https://www.cff.org/Research/Researcher-Resources/Awards-and-Grants/Training-Awards/Student-Traineeship-Award/

**The Smithsonian Institution Fellowship Program (SIFP)**

**Due date:** Early November

**Eligibility:** Research proposed must be conducted in-residence at the Smithsonian Institution in one of its areas of research (outlined in Smithsonian Opportunities for Research and Study)

**Funding period:** 3 to 12-month term

**Funding amount:** $36,000 annual stipend and up to $4,000 annual research allowance

https://www.smithsonianofi.com/fellowship-opportunities/smithsonian-institution-fellowship-program/

**Andrew Mellon Pre-doctoral Fellowship**

**Due date:** December

**Eligibility:** All eligible through 4th year

**Funding period:** 8 to 12 months of support and full tuition scholarship

**Funding amount:** $24,456 for full term

**Fellowships that our grad students have been successful with:**

**GRFP** -

Elizabeth R. (Awarded prior to beginning doctoral studies)

* Ask for previous applicants’ submissions and NOT just the winners; they may be happy to share reviewer
* Sure, your research proposal is important, but it just shows a general "yeah I can propose a solid research plan". You also need to frame it to be relevant to the NSF (i.e. less health-related)
* What they care most about is their outreach to those that do not have equal access to STEM. Why is that important to you? Are you part of one of those groups? What experiences have you had? How can you help expand the access to STEM for these groups?
* Customize your personal statement to strongly focus on their mission statement and values. Mention any type of personal scenario that has you as a member of a minority group. Talk about your own experiences, and how you'd help others.
* Nearly all of the comments I read from winning proposals said absolutely nothing about their research proposal and focused entirely on the unique background or experiences the person has had, and the really cool outreach ideas they have
* Common, but totally incorrect assumptions:
  + The research you propose is something you must do if you are awarded the GRFP

Nope. They don't care. If you get awarded it all they want to know is that you are remaining in.

* + The outreach you propose is something you are required to do and finish over the duration of the GRFP. Technically not the case because they just check to see that you’re in good standing, but you should try to at least do outreach of some type.

**Mellon -**

Jordan

* Write for your audience- they are not scientists. Avoid jargon.
* Remember that you are "telling a story" to the reader. This was advice that Dr. Jacobson gave me long ago, and I try to keep that in mind. The point of a good story is to start with a clear and important problem that the reader can get on board with, and then work the reader through your logic as your "story" develops.
* Make sure you have people outside your lab review it, because they can detect easier when you're using jargon or inadequately explaining a concept that might appear second nature to you. Ask an undergrad in your lab to review it if they are willing.
* Remember that the 3-page limit INCLUDES YOUR REFERENCES!

Rachel B.

* Instead of focusing most of your energy (and precious page space) on convincing someone that knows your methodology in and out, think about your big picture, what excites you about what you do, and how what you do makes the world better.
* Our department Grad Fellowship and Funding Committee reviewed and gave feedback to all the applicants, allowing us time to rewrite before the final submission. This made me realize how useful it is to have your work reviewed by someone who either: has a better handle on what the funding board wants than you or has a different perspective on science than you. So in any situation, just ask someone (especially someone not from your lab) to take a look at your draft!

**F31 -**

Sarah Sokol:

* Start early – these submissions have a lot of components and require documents/letters of support from collaborators.  The earlier you start, the easier it is to make sure you have each component and that each component is strong.
* Take time to read the FOA and identify all of the components that you will need to submit.
* Ask someone who has applied before if they are willing to share their documents with you and ask your PI to share some of their documents with you (for example their vertebrate animals document or biohazards document)
* Be straightforward in addressing potential issues, for example PIs current funding situation or support from the department. Having a letter of support from the department chair was actually really helpful.

**American Heart Association** -

Deepa:

* If you have to resubmit, carefully address every single comment and thank them for the positive points and addressing the points they found weak
* It is necessary to write the proposal strictly following AHA's instructions and format. The proposal should be precise, logical, and clearly worded.
* The significance of the project (to cardiovascular health) needs to be clear and emphasized well throughout the entire document. I was lucky to have a project that did and all the reviewers noted the high impact of the project to AHA's mission.
* From my experience, I think all the sections were equally important. Reviewers' comments from both submission and resubmission were very helpful and it seemed they did read the whole application packet well except for a few trivial points they missed.

Wase:

* I wrote, rewrote, and edited my research proposal for almost a year and got funded on my first submission
* For funding from most organizations but especially very specific ones like the American HEART association- key word being heart means that your project will have to without doubt related to the cardiovascular system. Same logic goes for say the Parkinson’s Disease Foundation and other specific funding bodies (Key word being Parkinson’s) whom I sought funding from during undergraduate research.
* Your PI’s record is IMPORTANT (unfortunately or fortunately this is factored in the review). You will need the PI’s biosketch and all to prove that the lab can support the research you propose. If it is far-fetched get a letter of support from a PI whose lab will definitely align with the mission statement- I got one from a PI who uses blood vessels to conduct research.

Add as insets or at the end of the chapter:

* Thank you to the Grad Fellowship and Funding Committee for some useful leads for grant sources!
* A BOX folder is available with successful grant applications from students in the department (reach out to Rachel Bainbridge [REB139@pitt.edu](mailto:REB139@pitt.edu) for link)
* You can find a list of more fellowships here: <https://www.biology.pitt.edu/graduate/enrolled-students/fellowships>
* Always keep an eye out for opportunities and awards from professional organizations you may belong to. Even if they do not offer a large fellowship or award, they may have travel grants or poster competitions at annual meetings.