

YOUNG INVESTIGATOR AWARD – GUIDELINES AND TERMS

The Young Investigator Award (YIA), CTF's longest running award program, provides funding for two years to early-career NF researchers, helping them to get established as independent investigators. Initiated over 30 years ago, the main function of the YIA program is to serve as a 'seeding mechanism' for researchers to secure larger grants, such as from NIH and CDMRP NFRP. Several former YIAs are now leaders in the NF research and clinical communities. In fact, CTF's 'seeding' of the NF field with new talent has been hailed as a key reason for rapid advancements in NF research in recent years.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The YIA mechanism supports basic and translational research including but not limited to -

- Understanding cellular, genetic, and molecular mechanisms underlying the pathogenesis of NF
- Identifying novel therapeutic targets
- Testing novel therapeutic targets
- Testing candidate therapeutics
- Analysis of natural history of NF

The focus of YIA research includes but is not limited to –

- NF1, NF2, and schwannomatosis
- NF manifestations such as –
 - Neurofibromas, schwannomas, malignant peripheral nerve sheath tumors, other brain and nervous system tumors
 - Bone abnormalities
 - Cardiovascular abnormalities
 - Learning disorders
 - Pain

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

1. Applicant must be one of the following –
 - a. A postdoctoral fellow (MD, Ph.D., or equivalent) with no more than **7 years** past completion of their first doctoral degree OR
 - b. A graduate student pursuing their MD, Ph.D., or equivalent

Note: Applications from individuals holding a faculty position will NOT be accepted.

2. Applicant must be affiliated with the laboratory of a senior researcher who is the applicant's research sponsor. The sponsor must offer a training environment that is conducive for the growth and education of an early-career NF researcher. As part of the application, the mentor will be asked to describe the intended training plan.
3. In a given year, more than one member of a laboratory can apply for a YIA. However, only one application per laboratory per year will be funded.
4. There are no citizenship requirements for this program. CTF seeks and welcomes applications from all qualified individuals worldwide.

Special Note to Federal Employees (e.g. NIH intramural researchers)

CTF requires its patent policy to be signed by all awardees and recipient institutions. Since the National Institutes of Health are prohibited by congressionally enacted federal law from accepting the terms of CTF's patent policy, the patent policy may be waived for federal employees, such as NIH intramural researchers, depending on the project being funded. Federal employees wishing to apply for a grant are, therefore, invited to discuss their project with CTF prior to submitting their grant proposal. Any information shared with CTF will be treated confidentially.

AWARD AMOUNT

Awards are for two years and rates are commensurate with experience.

Level of Training at Time of Application	Maximum Amount Eligible to Request (Salary + Indirect costs)***		
	Year 1	Year 2	Total Budget
Pre-doctoral	\$32,000*	\$32,000*	\$64,000*
Less Than 1 Year Post-doc	\$41,500	\$44,000	\$85,500
1 Year Post-doc	\$44,000	\$46,500	\$90,500
2 Year Post-doc	\$46,500	\$49,000	\$95,500
3 Year Post-doc	\$49,000	\$51,500	\$100,500
4 Year Post-doc	\$51,500	\$54,000	\$105,500
5 - 7 Year Post-doc	\$54,000**	\$54,000**	\$108,000**

*Pre-doctoral awardees receive a flat-rate of \$32,000 per year.

**5-7 year post-doc awardees receive the maximum YIA amount of \$54,000 per year.

***Total includes 10% indirect costs. *Indirect costs MUST NOT exceed 10% of the total award. Indirect costs are those overhead administrative and facility costs which are not readily identifiable with the project, but are nevertheless necessary for general operation. Examples of indirect costs include the salary and related benefits of individuals of administrative personnel, office supplies, rent, depreciation and utilities.*

Payments will be disbursed throughout the lifetime of the award at 6-month intervals. Payments are contingent on receipt of satisfactory progress reports providing updates on how the funded research is advancing.

On Activation of Award: 50% of Year 1 funds released
 6 Months after activation: 50% of Year 1 funds released
 12 Months after activation: 50% of Year 2 funds released
 18 Months after activation: 50% of Year 2 funds released

Note: Please also see the **SUPPLEMENTAL ALLOWANCE** section below.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The YIA application process comprises two stages, which will be executed through an online application portal. The first stage is submission of a letter of intent (LOI) or 'pre-application' outlining the proposed project and summarizing the key aims of the study. LOIs will be reviewed by YIA program committee, and those meeting the program specifications will be invited to proceed to the second stage of submitting full applications. Full applications will be evaluated by reviewers from CTF's Research Grant Review Panel (RGRP) taking the following elements into consideration –

- Scientific merit of proposed research
- Applicant's educational background and prior training
- Applicant's commitment to chosen research area
- Applicant's interest in/potential for a research career
- Current environment, including strength of current program of sponsor and institution
- Demonstrated scientific leadership of sponsor and institution
- Relevance to neurofibromatosis or schwannomatosis

Based on this review, the RGRP will select and recommend applications for funding. These recommendations will then be evaluated by CTF's Board of Directors (BOD), which will make the final decision on applications to be funded. No funding decision will be final until approved by the BOD.

NOTIFICATION TO APPLICANTS

CTF will inform applicants about the decision on their application within 3-4 weeks following BOD discussion. All applicants, both funded and not funded, will also be provided with a summary of the key comments of the RGRP.

AWARD ACTIVATION

For applications selected for funding, awardees will be requested to complete and return the following documentation to CTF before the award can be activated –

- **Acceptance of Award** – An award acceptance letter will be sent requesting information on applicant, institution, and contact officials for award disbursement.
- **Patent Policy** – All awardee institutions will be required to sign CTF's patent policy before award disbursement can be initiated. The patent policy is intended to ensure that any inventions or patented technologies arising from research supported by CTF are commercialized where possible. CTF anticipates recouping some revenues arising from commercialized technologies it supported, in proportion to the contribution made by CTF's initial funding. Such funds will be used to support further research initiatives at CTF.

STATUS OF AWARDEE

The awardee shall be considered an employee of the awardee's institution and not of CTF.

PERIODIC REPORTING

Awardees are required to submit two types of reports periodically -

- **Progress report**
 - A detailed update on the development of the YIA-funded research must be provided to CTF 6-, 12-, 18-, and 24 months after activation of the award.
- **Expenditure report**
 - A financial statement itemizing expenses for each year of funding must be provided to CTF within 60 days after completion of the funded year.
 - All expenses must be reported in US dollars only.
 - Expenditure reports must be signed by the institution's financial officer.
 - Any unexpended and uncommitted funds in possession of the awardee at the end of the award period must be returned to CTF within 60 days from expiration of the award.
 - In addition to the above, interim accounting may be requested by CTF.

Awardees will be provided with a schedule of payments and due dates of periodic reports in the award letter. Templates and instructions for these reports will be made available.

REPORTING AT NF CONFERENCE

Awardees are strongly encouraged to attend CTF's annual NF Conference for the two years in which they are a YIA recipient. Awardees are also encouraged to present the progress of their research as a poster or an oral presentation at the NF Conference.

EXTENDED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Should the awardee need to take a leave of absence for over a month for reasons such as maternity/paternity or illness, CTF must be informed of the date of departure and expected date of return.

AWARD CANCELLATION OR EARLY TERMINATION

In the event a YIA is cancelled or terminated, the award amount will be prorated based on the number of months it was in effect. A final report of expenditures and a refund of any unspent funds must be submitted to CTF within 60 days after cancellation or termination. Failure to provide the final expenditure report by the required date will result in suspension of the award until all materials are received.

AWARD PURPOSE CHANGE OR TRANSFER

Any fundamental change in the purpose for which the YIA was originally made must have prior written consent of CTF. A YIA may not be transferred from one institution to another without prior written authorization from CTF.

NO-COST EXTENSION

CTF allows awardees to request a No-Cost Extension (NCE) of the final budget period of their award for up to 1 year beyond its original expiration date. All terms and conditions specified in the original contract will apply during the extension period. Upon notification of approval by the YIA program committee, CTF will revise the project end date and provide an acknowledgment to the awardee.

SUPPLEMENTAL ALLOWANCE

Awardees may request from CTF a supplemental allowance of up to \$5,000 for the duration of the YIA and must reserve sufficient funds from this allowance to attend the NF Conference each year. Any remaining funds may be used to attend other relevant meetings (preferably at which the awardee is presenting a poster or talk), symposia, and training courses. Requests to participate in events other than the NF Conference must be approved in advance by CTF. The supplemental allowance is NOT intended for purchase of laboratory supplies or equipment, is non-transferrable, and must be relinquished back to CTF if not utilized by the awardee by the end of the YIA term.

OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Since the YIA covers only salary of the awardee, it is expected that other funding sources will be utilized for research expenses. Research overlap with such proposals is permitted as long as CTF is advised. However, it is the responsibility of the awardee and the sponsoring institution to inform CTF of possible conflicts relative to duplicate funding of this project by other funding agencies. Failure to inform CTF of other sources of support may result in loss of CTF funding.

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Awardees must promptly notify CTF of all public disclosures of the YIA-funded work. These include publications in scientific journals and presentations (e.g. poster, slide presentation) before a professional scientific or medical organization. CTF must be duly acknowledged in such disclosures. Further, awardees must also submit to CTF an electronic copy of the publication, slide presentation, or poster either when accepted for or immediately after publication/presentation along with name of the publishing journal or organization and the time and place of the meeting. CTF will treat such information as confidential until publicly presented or published by the awardee. CTF will also coordinate with the awardee for promoting such information on CTF's website or in other communications such as newsletters and email blasts.

PUBLICITY

No awardee shall release for publication, other than through the usual professional or scientific journals, the results of their work without notifying CTF of their intention to do so and furnishing a copy of the material intended for release. All announcements to any media of public information pertaining to the awardee and the work accomplished through the YIA must be approved by the awardee, awardee's institution, and CTF.

FOLLOW-ON FUNDING

Awardees are required to keep CTF informed about any follow-on funding, collaborations, and publications (posters, papers) generated from the research funded by the YIA. This information will be requested annually via our online system for a period of **5 years** following expiration of the YIA. Such continuing communications will allow CTF to measure the impact of our research funding more easily.

Please email grants@ctf.org if you have any questions. We wish you the very best and look forward to receiving your application!