

Transition to Independence Grants

Guidelines and Application Instructions

Only active ASN members are eligible to apply.

Applicants may only submit one application during a cycle.

Transition to Independence Grants are not renewable and previous recipients are not eligible for a second grant.

The Transition to Independence Grants Program includes the following grants:

- Joseph V. Bonventre Research Scholar Grant
- Carl W. Gottschalk Research Scholar Grant
- John Merrill Grant in Transplantation
- Norman Siegel Research Scholar Grant in Pediatrics
- Oxalosis & Hyperoxaluria Foundation (OHF)-KidneyCure Grant
- KidneyCure Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Research Scholar Grant

By submitting an application to the Transition to Independence Grants program, candidates are considered for all of the opportunities listed above.

Purpose

The KidneyCure Transition to Independence Grants Program provides funding for young faculty to foster evolution to an independent research career and a successful application for a National Institutes of Health (NIH) full R01 grant or equivalent. By the end of the grant period, a recipient will have an independent research career and be competitive for federal and nonfederal funding.

Eligibility

Please note that the eligibility criteria have been updated.

To apply for a Transition to Independence Grant, a candidate:

- Must be working in North or Central America during the grant period.
- Must be an active member of ASN.
- Must hold an MD, DO, PhD, or equivalent degree.
- Cannot be a previous recipient of an ASN or KidneyCure Transition to Independence Grant (formerly ASN Foundation for Kidney Research Career Development Grant). Previous ASN-Amos Medical Faculty Development Program (AMFDP) grant recipients are excepted from this clause.
- Cannot be a previous recipient of a National Institutes of Health full R01 grant, VA Merit Award, or equivalent.
- Must be within 10 years of initial faculty appointment at the time of the award activation.
- Must have a proposed project that is independent of previous mentors.

- If the specific aims of the Transition to Independence Grant overlap with the aims of an applicant's other current external grant(s), applicants cannot have more than \$250,000 (in annual direct costs) in external grant support, including KidneyCure funds, at the time of the award activation.
- Must devote at least 75% of their time to research.
- Appointment to full-time faculty must be confirmed in writing by the Department Chair, indicating the date of first full-time faculty appointment, and providing assurance that the department will provide the needed resources for conducting independent research (laboratory and office space, salary support, and protected research time of at least 75%).

An applicant who is uncertain of their eligibility should request an advisory opinion from KidneyCure before completing an application. Please email grants@asn-online.org.

Extension Requests

KidneyCure will accept extension requests for the 10-year eligibility window on a case-by-case basis. Applicants must submit supporting documentation for requests, which can include family care responsibilities, medical concerns, disability, natural disasters, and active-duty military service.

An automatic 12-month extension will be applied per childbirth during the initial faculty appointment. All parents, including those who adopt, are eligible for this particular extension.

To be submit an extension request, please email grants@asn-online.org.

Previous or Current Funding Allowed

Please note that the previous or current funding allowed has been updated.

Applicants are allowed to have currently, or have had previously, extramural (NIH or KidneyCure) mentored career development grant funding (e.g., NIH K08). Applicants cannot be a previous recipient of a National Institutes of Health full R01 grant, VA Merit Award, or equivalent. However, total grant funding, including the KidneyCure Transition to Independence Grant, cannot exceed \$250,000 in annual direct costs, **if there is scientific overlap of the specific aims of the proposal**. The amount of the KidneyCure grant will be reduced as appropriate if total funding exceeds this amount at any time during the funding period of the grant.

Should a candidate receive an NIH R01 grant or equivalent with the researcher serving as principal investigator during the funding period, they must notify KidneyCure in writing. KidneyCure will ask the candidate to relinquish their Transition to Independence Grant upon activation of the R01 or equivalent if that occurs in **year one** of the Transition to Independence Grant.

Funding and Stipulations

- The award will provide \$100,000 annually for two years, beginning July 1, 2024, and will cover salaries/supplies related to the candidate's research proposal. A maximum of 10% of the award per year may be used to cover indirect costs at the candidate's sponsoring institution.
- A progress report and a financial report are required for non-competitive renewal of the grant for the second year. Final reports are also required at the end of the funding period. The award is for continuous support, and interruptions in the period of support will require prior written approval from KidneyCure.
- Recipients shall acknowledge KidneyCure's (and co-sponsoring organization, if applicable) support in publications resulting from their proposed work.
- Grants may be transferred from one institution to another only with the prior approval of KidneyCure.

Use of Grant Funds

- Salary/Fringe: Up to \$70,000 per year can be used for the PI's salary, including fringe benefits.
- Supplies: Funds may be used for research supplies or the support salary of a research assistant.
- Equipment: Funds cannot be used to purchase equipment that costs more than \$5,000, unless such purchase is clearly justified in the research plan and approved by KidneyCure.
- Restrictions: Up to \$2,000 a year may be used on travel to attend relevant scientific meetings. Funds may not be used for clinical or administrative time.

Application and Document Formatting

An application for the Transition to Independence Grants Program must include:

- I. Contact Information and project title
- II. Applicant biosketch (using a modified NIH Biosketch format)
 - a. The biosketch must list relevant full-length publications or articles in press (not abstracts or submitted publications) of the applicant and exact order of authorship as well as prior, current, and pending research support (include grant number and agency; contact PI and role; award start and end date; title; and specific aims). A link to the complete list of published work in the applicant's bibliography can be included in Section D. Contributions to Science (maximum of 5 pages).
- III. Research Project Plan using the KidneyCure provided template (Maximum of nine and a half pages total, not including references and the Additional Funding Disclosure)
 - a. Roadmap to Independence (1 page maximum)
 - i. The Roadmap to Independence must discuss the candidate's background, career goals, and career development and be no more than one page, single spaced. Below are prompts to assist in completing this section. ***This section must be written by the applicant.***
 1. What is your primary career intention and your long-term career goals?
 2. How will you measure your success in reaching these goals and what is your anticipated timeline for their completion?
 3. What new knowledge and research skills will be attained through the completion of this award?
 4. Describe the professional responsibilities/activities including other research projects beyond the minimum required nine person-months (75% full-time professional effort) commitment to the career award. Explain how these responsibilities/activities will help ensure career progression to achieve independence as an investigator.
 - b. Research Environment (1 page maximum)
 - i. The Research Environment must explain the candidate's research environment at the institution and be no more than one page, single spaced. ***This section must be written by the applicant.***
 - c. Abstract (Half page maximum)
 - i. The Abstract must summarize the proposal in lay terms and be no more than 500 words, single spaced.
 - d. Specific Aims (1 page maximum)
 - e. Preliminary Work, Proposed Research Strategy and Potential Problems (5 pages maximum)
 - f. References (e.g. cited literature)
 - g. Resubmission Defense (1 page maximum)
 - i. Mandatory if you are resubmitting an unsuccessful proposal from a previous cycle.
 - ii. Explain how you addressed the comments of the reviewers to improve your project or proposal in no more than one page, single spaced. If you are not resubmitting, please remove this page from your application.
 - h. **NEW: Additional Funding Disclosure** (if applicable, one page maximum).

- i. Mandatory if you have current extramural (NIH, KidneyCure, or other) mentored career development grant funding.
- ii. For each grant, provide the start date, project period, source, title, principal investigator, specific aims, and annual direct costs. State if there are any areas of overlap of the specific aims with those of the Transition to Independence Grant proposal (specifying the overlapping aims), and if so, describe the impact the new funding will have on the overall research strategy and provide an explanation of how the research will be coordinated between the grants.

NOTE: The Research Project Plan does not need to include a proposed budget.

- IV. Letter from Department Chair
 - a. The letter must provide assurance and institutional commitment that the candidate:
 - i. Holds a full-time faculty appointment (including a description of the track).
 - ii. Will devote at least 75% of their time to research.
 - iii. Will use the award for independent investigation.
 - iv. Will have appropriate laboratory or research space, access to necessary equipment, and research support.
 - b. The letter should provide the institution's view of the candidate.
 - c. The letter should be signed and on institutional letterhead.
- V. Letter documenting permission to submit application (combined into one document with Letter from the Department Chair)
 - a. The letter or document must provide proof that the applicant's institution is aware of the program guidelines and has approved submission of the application.

NOTE: Items IV. (Department Chair letter) and V. (Permission to submit) must be combined into one document for upload to the application. This document should be uploaded to the "Department Chair" field.

- VI. Three (3) Reference Letters
 - a. Reference letters should be written by persons familiar with the candidate's scientific interests and abilities. Letters are submitted blindly and can be addressed to the KidneyCure Grants Review Committee. Letters must be submitted prior to the application deadline and cannot be edited once submitted.

Additionally, the proposal must follow NIH guidelines including the following formatting guidelines:

- Font size must be 11 points or larger. Smaller text in figures, graphs, diagrams and charts is acceptable as long as it is legible when the page is viewed at 100%. Recommended fonts include Arial, Georgia, Helvetica, and Palatino Linotype. A Symbol font may be used to insert special characters. Black text color is also recommended.
- Type density, including characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per linear inch. Type may be no more than six lines per vertical inch. Use standard paper size (8 ½" x 11"). Use at least one-half inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) for all pages. No information should appear in the margins. Do not include additional headers or footers aside from those established in the provided templates.
- Uploaded files must be in PDF formats only. Documents may be prepared using a preferred editing software (e.g. Microsoft Word), but must be converted to PDF format before uploading to the application. Please note that some PDF conversion software may reduce font size. The final PDF document must comply with the font requirements listed above.

You must use the KidneyCure-provided Research Project Plan template. Please download it from the KidneyCure website.

Applications that do not adhere to the above instructions will be declined.

Application Process

Applicants for a KidneyCure Transition to Independence Grant must be current, active ASN members to begin an application. To become a member, please visit the [ASN Membership webpage](#).

- I. To begin an application, visit the [KidneyCure Transition to Independence Grants webpage](#). Select the grant you would like to apply to. Click “Application” and log-in using your ASN ID and password.
- II. Download all templates and documents needed to complete your application (Biosketch and Research Project Plan).
- III. Prepare all documents for your application (Biosketch, Research Project Plan, Letter from Department Chair and Permission to Submit Letter combined document, and email addresses for three references).
- IV. Enter contact information, including research proposal title and top three keywords. Once submitted, these fields cannot be edited by the applicant.
- V. Upload Biosketch (maximum of 1 MB).
- VI. Upload the Research Project Plan using the KidneyCure provided template (maximum of 1 MB).
- VII. Upload the letter from the Department Chair and the Permission to Submit combined document (maximum of 1 MB).

NOTE: You cannot proceed without uploading documents.

- VIII. Enter the email address of three (3) references. Each reference will receive an email with a link to upload a letter of reference to the application. The applicant will be copied on each email. *These references cannot be changed once the application is submitted.*
- IX. Once you enter all reference contacts and send the emails, click submit.

Editing an Application Before the Deadline

Many application fields may be edited at any point before the deadline by visiting the KidneyCure Grants webpage, signing into the website, clicking “Application,” and then clicking “View Status.” The applicant may override documents by uploading new versions, resend reference letter invites, and view the number of reference letters submitted. Changes to the project title and keywords must be requested via email (grants@asn-online.org).

In order to give references ample time to submit letters of recommendation, it is suggested an applicant upload placeholder documents to proceed to the reference email section. Clicking submit will save the application.

Applicants should secure all references prior to submission as reference contacts cannot be changed once an application is submitted.

Applications cannot be edited after the deadline.

Application Checklist

- ✓ Download all templates needed for submitting the application
- ✓ Complete demographic and project qualifiers
- ✓ Upload applicant biosketch
- ✓ Upload Research Project Plan (Maximum of 9.5 pages total, not including references and Additional Funding Disclosure)
 - Roadmap to Independence (1 page only)
 - Environment and Institutional Commitment (1 page only)
 - Abstract (Half page maximum)
 - Specific Aims (1 page only)

- Preliminary Work, Proposed Research Strategy and Potential Problems (5 pages only)
- References (e.g. cited literature)
- Resubmission Defense (1 page maximum)
- ✓ Upload letter from Department Chair and Permission to Submit document
- ✓ Send emails to three references for letters of support

Evaluation Criteria and Process

The KidneyCure Grants Review Committee will consider the potential of the applicant and the proposed project for eventual funding by an NIH full R01 grant or its equivalent. Assessment will include the qualifications of the applicant with respect to prior training, productivity, and independence, as well as the scientific merit of the proposed project. The institutional commitment to the development of the applicant as an independent investigator will also be assessed.

The review process is as follows:

- 1) Application opens (fall)
- 2) Application deadline (early winter)
- 3) Peer review process (winter)
- 4) Committee meeting (early spring)
- 5) Award notifications (spring)

Notification of Award

In May, all applicants will receive an email from KidneyCure announcing that their application status has changed. The email will contain a unique link that will direct the user to the KidneyCure Grant Submission Panel. Once logged in, the applicant can view the funding decision and download the reviewer comments. All documents in the applicant's KidneyCure Grant Submission Panel will remain live for 30 days after the funding notification.

Contact

Please contact KidneyCure with any questions at grants@asn-online.org.