



Academic Year 2027-2028

Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program

Program Guidelines and Fellowship Application



The American Kidney Fund (AKF) is pleased to invite applicants for its Clinical Scientist in Nephrology (CSN) Program for academic year 2027. The goal of the CSN Program is to improve the quality of care provided to patients with kidney diseases and to promote clinical research in nephrology. This goal is achieved by enhancing the training and education of nephrologists who desire to pursue an academic career and whose primary professional commitment is to scholarship in the provision of patient care. Awardees conduct prevention and outcomes research and pursue advanced training in areas related to the AKF vision.

The American Kidney Fund

The American Kidney Fund fights kidney disease on all fronts as the nation's leading kidney nonprofit. AKF works on behalf of the 37 million Americans living with kidney disease, and the millions more at risk, with an unmatched scope of programs that support people wherever they are in their fight against kidney disease—from prevention through transplant. The Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program was established in 1988 as a direct extension of AKF's mission to improve the quality of care of patients with kidney diseases. Potential candidates and mentors can view the entire history of CSN fellows and their projects on the [AKF website](#).

The Program

A Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program may be granted yearly based on program funding. The maximum duration of each fellowship is two years. The second year of funding is not automatic and is dependent on approval of the first year's progress report. The maximum level of funding is \$90,000 per year and shall be used principally to support the candidate and his/her career development. This sum is expected to cover the individual fellow's salary (which will follow National Institute of Health guidelines according to the post-graduate year plus comparable fringe benefits at the institution, not to exceed \$65,000) as well as training-related expenses. These may include expenditures for enrollment in academic courses, books, computer hardware and software, and support for research and travel expenses (maximum of \$2,000 per year) as required by the plan of studies and justified in the budget

outlined in the application. AKF will not provide support for institutional overhead expenses, patient care costs, excessive lab expenses, or expenditures for technical and/or clerical personnel. Any funds remaining at the end of the first year will be applied to the second year, if approved. Any funds remaining at the end of the second year must be returned to AKF. Successful candidates will identify an area of knowledge broadly applicable to clinical nephrology in which they will develop expertise and conduct research resulting in publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Such areas of study will be primarily in the non-biological sciences and will include disciplines in public health and preventive medicine, humanities, and in social and behavioral sciences. Examples are bioethics, biostatistics, epidemiology, health economics, health policy and administration, health services research, medical decision science, and patient oriented research. AKF will give special consideration to projects relating to clinical ethics, quality of care and quality of life. We encourage the exploration of new fields of study that bear on the improvement of clinical care in nephrology.

The Candidate

Acceptable candidates for the Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program are individuals who:

- Have completed a residency in internal medicine or pediatrics
- Are qualified to sit for the American Board of Internal Medicine or Pediatrics
- Are in the process of completing or have completed at least one year of training in clinical nephrology in an accredited U.S. program

- Can demonstrate an aptitude for and a commitment to developing special expertise in an area of knowledge applicable to clinical nephrology
- Intend to pursue a professional career with emphasis on independent research, and the provision of care to patients with kidney diseases, preferably within the confines of an academic medical center where they will be exposed to continued learning and teaching
- Can secure the support of their training program in the pursuit of these goals
- Can commit to timely communication with AKF including but not limited to prompt responses to AKF's requests for progress reports during the Fellowship

The Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program is not intended as a fellowship-to-faculty transitional award. Preference will be given to applicants in their first or second year of fellowship. If you have questions regarding your eligibility, please contact AKF at (ProfessionalEducation@KidneyFund.org) prior to applying. First-time applicants are strongly encouraged to contact AKF should they have questions regarding their eligibility, research, or other aspects of the application. Faculty members or individuals who will be receiving other funding are not eligible. All recipients of the fellowship are required to present their final research findings to the AKF Board of Trustees at the conclusion of their training as Clinical Scientists. Recipients will also be required to complete progress reports, ad-hoc reports and other communications throughout the duration of their fellowship. In addition, they will participate in AKF/CSN-related activities during their fellowship and continue to engage with AKF upon the completion of their fellowship. Recipients will also agree that any publications (e.g., journal articles, abstracts, presentations, posters, etc.) or interviews arising from research conducted during their tenure as an AKF fellow, will state that they were supported by a grant from the American Kidney Fund Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program. Copies of publications or interviews will also be forwarded to AKF for use in organizational publications or announcements.

The Training Institution

The institution must operate an accredited training program in nephrology or pediatric nephrology. Successful sponsoring institutions will be those that have access to comprehensive clinical and research facilities, and where a well-developed scholarly environment exists. The chief/head of the program must certify the candidate's credentials, capabilities and program of study adhere to the following criteria:

- Continued exposure of the Clinical Scientist to the clinical practice of nephrology in a scholarly environment is considered part of this fellowship experience. Ongoing clinical exposure should take up at least half a day but not more than one day per week for the duration of the fellowship.
- A collaborative effort with faculty members at the same or other institutions who can offer reasonable guarantees of availability and dedication to the training of the Clinical Scientist in their specific area of study. One of these faculty members (the Primary Mentor) will accept primary responsibility for the overall supervision of this component of the fellowship. The overall strength of the application will depend critically on the nature of the collaboration and supervision provided by the Primary Mentor responsible for instruction of the candidate in the clinical research area of study.
- An assurance that the appropriate supervision will be provided to maintain the quality of training, and that yearly progress reports detailing the Clinical Scientist's performance in the clinical and research areas will be submitted to the institution's Quality Control Committee and to the American Kidney Fund.
- Any salary or fringe benefits that exceed the cap of \$65,000/year are to be covered by the fellow's institution.

Only one application from pediatrics and one from adult medicine from each program will be accepted. If you have any questions about the application process,

especially if you are a first-time applicant, please contact the Professional Education Department at ProfessionalEducation@KidneyFund.org.

Completed applications must be received via email by January 05, 2027. Please email to: ProfessionalEducation@KidneyFund.org.

The Application Process

Candidates will submit the completed application to the American Kidney Fund. As illustrated from pages 5-13, this should contain:

- Candidate information and NIH biosketch.
 - Including a list of current clinical research projects and their principal investigators.
- A statement of intent by the candidate detailing the plan of studies, the area of research, and an overall career plan and expectations.
- A formal statement detailing the candidate's proposed research project.
- A statement detailing the candidate's proposed research project (plain language, 250 words or less).
- Three references and their letters of support, including one from the nephrology fellowship program director.
- A letter of support from the chief/head of the Division of Nephrology.
 - Including acknowledgment of the relevance of clinical research to the division and the institution.
- A letter of support from the Mentor(s) who will supervise the training of the candidate in the chosen area of study and the Mentor(s)' biosketch.
- Budget Proposal and Justification.

Timeframe

The above documents must reach the American Kidney Fund **on or before January 05, 2027**.

The AKF CSN Selection Committee will review all applications and proceed to a preliminary ranking no later than January 2027. The top candidates will be invited to interview no later than February 22, 2027. If awarded, the first year's funding will begin July 1, 2027 and proceed through June 30, 2028.

All inquiries regarding the fellowship should be directed to the Professional Education Department at ProfessionalEducation@KidneyFund.org.

Successful candidates seeking to continue their fellowship for a second year to begin July 1, 2028 must submit evidence in report form by May 1, 2028. The progress report should detail that their plan of study is proceeding according to the goals outlined in their application and is consistent with the overall mission of the American Kidney Fund. It is also required that the report be accompanied by a detailed letter of support from the candidate's nephrology Primary Mentor commenting on the candidate's progress and a budget reconciliation. A presentation to the Board of Trustees and a final report is also required after the fellowship has been completed. The final report should include a budget reconciliation for both years.

Application Procedure

Eligible candidates must electronically submit their application via email to:

ProfessionalEducation@KidneyFund.org

Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program

2027 Application

FORM A

CANDIDATE - Please attach a copy of your NIH Biosketch

Name _____

Home Address _____

Business Address _____

Telephone Number (Business) _____ (Personal) _____

Email Address _____ Fax _____

Birthdate _____ Citizenship _____

Renal Fellowships (current and previous)

Institution	Dates (mm/yy)
_____	Start _____ / _____ End _____ / _____
_____	Start _____ / _____ End _____ / _____

Signature _____

CHIEF/HEAD OF NEPHROLOGY PROGRAM

Name _____

Academic Title _____

Business Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Email Address _____

CLINICAL RESEARCH MENTOR

Name _____

Academic Title _____

Business Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Email Address _____

How were you referred to the CSN program/how did you hear about us? _____

Where do you see yourself with future plans in academics? _____

PERSONAL STATEMENT – Please include a personal statement, of no more than two (2) pages, including the following:

- I. State year of current renal fellowship and expected date of completion (*If the expected date of completion is before the two years of which funding is complete, please contact AKF prior to submitting the application to determine eligibility.*)
- II. Describe your educational history and current professional goals and how they match the goals of AKF
- III. Describe your intended course of study
- IV. Describe how you would expect your selection as an AKF Clinical Scientist in Nephrology fellow to influence your career path
- V. Describe how you intend to distribute your total effort on the following activities:
 - A. Patient Care
 - B. Research
 1. Primary project
 2. Other projects
 - C. Course of Study – Field of Interest
 1. Formal course work
 2. Time with Mentor
 3. Independent study
- VI. Describe your relationship to your Mentor
- VII. Provide 2–3 sentences summarizing your proposed project in plain language.
- VIII. Describe how you intend to stay in close communication with AKF throughout the Fellowship, and your preferred method of communication (i.e., e-mail, telephone calls or other)

PROPOSED RESEARCH PROJECT – Briefly describe your proposed project in three (3) pages or less, excluding citations (no appendices allowed). Be sure to include the following:

- I. Project Title
- II. Specific aims
- III. Background justifying the proposed study
- IV. Methods
 - A. Study population
 - B. Variables to be studied
 - C. Outcome(s)
 - D. Statistical approach
 - E. Sample size or power calculation
- V. Limitations
- VI. Expected start and end dates for the study (Should the study date extend beyond the funding timeframe, please clarify plans for continuation.)
- VII. Possible next steps and future direction of the project

PROPOSED RESEARCH PROJECT - Please provide a lay version description of your proposed research project (250 words or less).

REFERENCES

List the names and addresses below of three individuals who can provide the American Kidney Fund with information regarding your personal and professional qualifications pertinent to this application. One of these individuals must be the nephrology fellowship Program Director. Please have your three references mail or e-mail their recommendations to the American Kidney Fund.

Name

Academic Title

Business Address

Telephone Number

Email Address

Name

Academic Title

Business Address

Telephone Number

Email Address

Name

Academic Title

Business Address

Telephone Number

Email Address

Note: Applications that exceed the page limits or include appendices will not be reviewed

Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program

2027 Application

CONSENT FORM FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION

By completing this application to become an American Kidney Fund Clinical Scholar, I recognize my right under the "Family Educational Right and Privacy Act," Section 368 of the "General Education Provisions Act" 20 U.S.C. §1232g initially adopted by Section 513 of P.L. 93-380 dates August 21, 1974 and amended by P.L. 93-568 dated December 13, 1974. This statute as amended provides that information which could personally identify me may not be released except as this consent implies. I therefore agree that the AKF Selection Committee and their designee(s) are hereby authorized to release personally identifiable information from this application and in the course of my tenure as an American Kidney Fund Clinical Scholar, to the American Kidney Fund and to other organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, educational agencies or institutions for the purpose of administering or improving the American Kidney Fund Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program or for improving the general weal. I shall expect the information which may be made available to the public (as itemized above) to be maintained in a separate file available to my inspection on demand. Such file shall contain a dated list of organizations or individuals to whom this information has been released.

By submitting this application, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the AKF Privacy Policy, found online at <https://www.kidneyfund.org/american-kidney-fund-privacy-policy>, and consent to the collection, use, processing, storage, and disclosure of my personal information as described in the Privacy Policy. I agree to receive communications from AKF by phone, email, postal mail, and fax. I acknowledge that AKF will never sell my personal data or the information I voluntarily provide.

Signature _____ Date _____

Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program
2027 Application

**CONFIDENTIAL REFERENCE REPORT INSTITUTIONAL ASSURANCE
FORM B**

TO THE APPLICANT

This section is to be completed **by the applicant** before it is presented to the Chief/Head of the Division of Nephrology.

Name: _____

TO THE CHIEF/HEAD OF THE DIVISION OF NEPHROLOGY

The above-named applicant to the American Kidney Fund Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program has named you as his/her main reference. We ask your cooperation in responding promptly. All replies **must be received on or before January 05, 2027** and will be held in strict confidence. The completed form is not to be returned to the applicant, but emailed to: ProfessionalEducation@KidneyFund.org

LETTER FROM CHIEF/HEAD OF DIVISION OF NEPHROLOGY

Please indicate in the space below the period of time you have known the applicant, and in what capacity.

From _____ To _____

Relationship to Applicant _____

- In your letter please elaborate on the applicant's performance on the basis of which you arrived at your assessment. If possible, please cite some specific illustration of the applicant's performance.
- Elaborate on how the applicant will continue to progress during the time of participation in the American Kidney Fund Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program. Please be specific regarding your own role in the training of the applicant and expand on the relevance of the intended field of study for the Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program.
- Please describe the available facilities and faculty support within the nephrology fellowship program.
- Please describe how the fellow will be supported to pursue his/her research activities if not chosen for this award.
- Please describe the relevance of clinical research to your division and the institution and provide a list of current clinical research projects and their principle investigators.
- Please give your opinion on the candidate's likelihood of success as a faculty member.

Signature of Reference

Print Name

Title

Institution

Telephone Number

Email Address

Date

Email to:

ProfessionalEducation@KidneyFund.org

Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program

2027 Application

CONFIDENTIAL REFERENCE REPORT STATEMENT FROM MENTOR(S) FORM C

TO THE APPLICANT

This section is to be completed **by the applicant** before presenting to the Mentor who will supervise the clinical research component of the program of study.

Name: _____

TO THE MENTOR(S)

The above-named applicant to the American Kidney Fund Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program has named you as his/her reference for the clinical research mentor field of study. We ask your cooperation in responding promptly. All replies **must be received on or before January 05, 2027** and will be held in strict confidence. This section of the application is of crucial importance. Granting of the fellowship will depend critically upon the evidence provided here that the plan of study is sound, that it is in keeping with the overall goals of the American Kidney Fund as outlined in the announcement, and in that the candidate will be closely followed and supervised by a dedicated mentor in performing the research project. The completed form is not to be returned to the applicant, but emailed to: [**ProfessionalEducation@KidneyFund.org**](mailto:ProfessionalEducation@KidneyFund.org)

MENTOR(S)' LETTER

Please indicate in the space below the period of time you have known the applicant, and in what capacity.

From _____ To _____

Relationship to Applicant _____

- Please describe the available facilities and faculty supervision relative to the applicant's field of study.
- Elaborate on how the applicant will continue to progress during the time of participation in the American Kidney Fund Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program. Please be specific regarding your own role in the training of the applicant and expand on the relevance of the intended field of study for the Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program.
- Please list funded projects and funding source for the past three years

Project Title

Funding Source

Dates

_____	From _____ To _____
_____	From _____ To _____
_____	From _____ To _____

- Please append a copy of your four-page biosketch (NIH format).

Signature of Reference

Print Name

Title

Institution

Telephone Number

Email Address

Date

Email to:

ProfessionalEducation@KidneyFund.org

Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program

2027 Application

BUDGET PROPOSAL FORM D

This form is to be completed jointly by a representative of the Division of Nephrology and the person responsible for the clinical research area of study. Please indicate in the space below the institution or department which will be responsible for administering the financial aspect of the American Kidney Fund Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program.

Applicant's Name _____

Institution _____

Contact and Title _____

Telephone Number _____

Email Address _____

Please outline the expected annual budget for the applicant.

FIRST YEAR BUDGET – Please provide a budget justification page

Applicant's Salary Including Benefits – first year of fellowship \$ _____
(Must correspond to AKF's guidelines [not to exceed \$65,000] – see program description)

Please itemize your request for additional monies

1 _____ \$ _____

2 _____ \$ _____

3 _____ \$ _____

4 _____ \$ _____

5 _____ \$ _____

6 _____ \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

SECOND YEAR BUDGET – Please provide a budget justification page

Applicant's Salary Including Benefits – second year of fellowship \$ _____
(Must correspond to AKF's guidelines [not to exceed \$65,000] – see program description)

Please itemize your request for additional monies

- 1 _____ \$ _____
- 2 _____ \$ _____
- 3 _____ \$ _____
- 4 _____ \$ _____
- 5 _____ \$ _____
- 6 _____ \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

Email to:

ProfessionalEducation@KidneyFund.org

PLEASE NOTE THIS FORM REQUIRES TWO SIGNATURES

Signature of Reference (CHIEF/HEAD OF DIVISION)

Print Name

Title

Institution

Telephone Number

Email Address

Date

Signature of Reference (MENTOR)

Print Name

Title

Institution

Telephone Number

Email Address

Date



SAMPLE

Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program

CANDIDATE EVALUATION INSTRUCTIONS

We are committed to nondiscrimination in all its forms, at all levels, and throughout our organization and programs. We are an equal opportunity nonprofit, we welcome scholarships applicants of all backgrounds, and we provide a fair and equitable review of all applications.

Instructions: Please review the instructions and use as a guide as you evaluate the application by assigning the candidate a rank score in the drop-down box for each question. Please use the following scale:

Poor (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) Outstanding

1

EXAMPLES OF PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

- Examples can include inside and outside of medical training.
- Examples within medical training can include awards received during medical school and residency/fellowship training (e.g. AOA election, Gold Humanism Society, residency and fellowship awards for service).
- For examples outside of medicine, consider the following: Is there a history of a career or work outside of medicine whereby candidate accomplished goals and explicitly states such?
- For examples of accomplishments in research, consider the following: Has the candidate shown in their CV a record of running projects to a good conclusion? Is there a history of any pilot funding? If they have done research has the candidate presented it and have they published either abstracts or any preliminary work or publications?
- Higher scores reflect greater professional achievement.

2

EXAMPLES OF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

- To address this criterion, consider the professional and academic trajectory of the applicant.
- Higher scores reflect concrete examples that support a rising trajectory of professional growth inside and outside of medicine.

3

EXAMPLES OF EXERCISING LEADERSHIP

- Examples may include leadership in research, clinical work (e.g. chief resident), committees, service, and other endeavors inside or outside of work.
- Higher scores reflect either breadth or depth with many examples in CV of leading teams to accomplish tasks.

4

RESEARCH PLAN AND CANDIDATE'S PLAN ALIGNS WITH AKF VISION AND MISSION

- Higher scores reflect candidate explicitly stating or having a reference to the mission and vision of AKF and saying how their research and/or future career plans align with the AKF mission and vision.

5

CANDIDATE'S PLAN FOR UTILIZING BENEFITS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

- Higher scores reflect the following:
 - ◇ Candidates who present a consistent plan that is greater than sum of its parts and that clearly states how the AKF will help them to launch their research, develop skills needed for professional advancement and prepare them for next steps in their career development. There should be explicit statements about how the funds will be used and the plan and timeline should match the budget and award duration.
 - ◇ Candidates who clearly state that their goal is to pursue an academic career and that the next step is a K23 application.
- Lower scores reflect the following:
 - ◇ Candidates imply they are applying for AKF fellowship because they have reached a several year endpoint of research and it is unclear if their division will support them in the future without funding, so they are willing to stay as a fellow if funded.
 - ◇ Candidates are requesting support solely to have protected time to improve publication record without giving attention to need for professional development.
 - ◇ Candidates do not explicitly state what their plan is for their career after the AKF fellowship.

6

INSTITUTION'S PLAN FOR UTILIZING THE BENEFITS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

- Same criteria as #5. Additionally:
 - ◇ The mentor and division letters explicitly state that the candidate is using the funds and the time to either start or support a launch for research—during a usual time fellowship occurs.
 - ◇ Explicit statements and budget supporting use of funds towards research and candidate training.
 - ◇ Mentor and division letters state that applicant will apply for K23.

7

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

- Higher scores will align with:
 - ◇ Clear, concise and specific aims achievable within the proposed study time frame.
 - ◇ Explicit statement or table with study time frame and objectives.
 - ◇ Can align with, but must be separate from, primary mentor's work—explicitly stating how different.
 - ◇ Research strategy that is clearly written, and addresses background, methods, approach, follow up and limitations for each aim.
 - ◇ Explicit statement on next steps that this research will inform.
 - ◇ Tying the candidate's proposal into future career development plans and future research.



American Kidney Fund®
FIGHTING ON ALL FRONTS

SAMPLE

Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program
CANDIDATE EVALUATION FORM

I. **Candidate**

II. **Institution**

III. **Instructions:** Please review the instructions and use as a guide as you evaluate the application by assigning the candidate a rank score in the drop-down box for each question. Please use the following scale:

Poor

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Outstanding

1

☐

PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

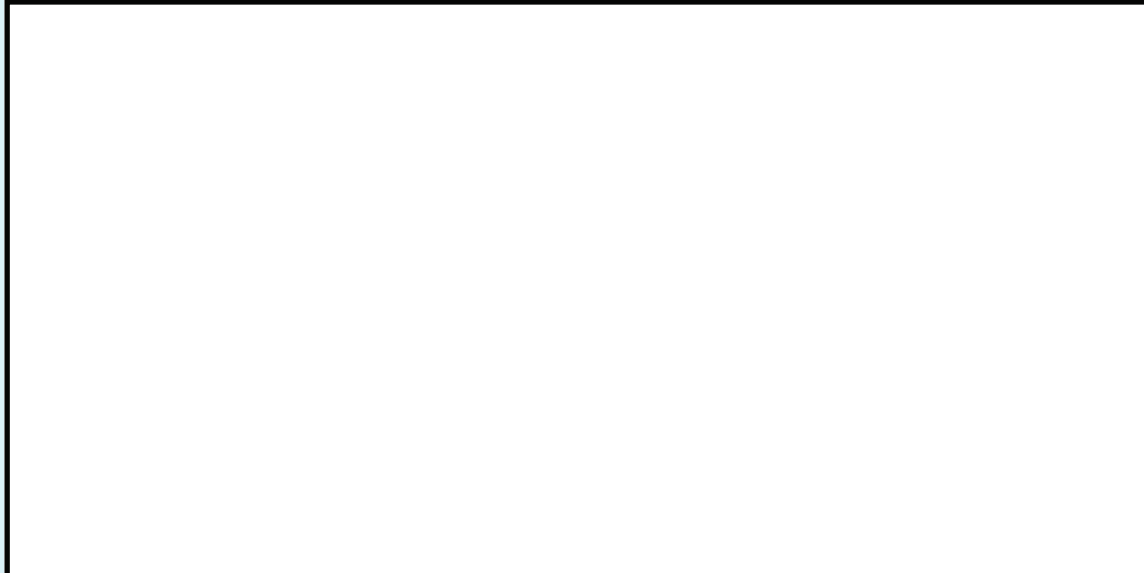
2

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH



3

EXERCISING LEADERSHIP



4

RESEARCH PLAN AND CANDIDATE PLAN ALIGNS WITH AKF VISION AND MISSION



5

CANDIDATE'S PLAN FOR UTILIZING BENEFITS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

6

INSTITUTION'S PLAN FOR UTILIZING THE BENEFITS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

7

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

TOTAL SCORE

(Type total score in the open field)