

Program Guidelines

PKD Foundation 2026 Research Fellowships Request for Applications (RFA)

Overview of Program Goals and Scope

The PKD Foundation's principal mission is to support basic, translational, and clinical research that will benefit patients with autosomal dominant and autosomal recessive polycystic kidney disease (ADPKD and ARPKD).

The PKD Foundation is interested in fostering research in the areas relevant to PKD with the goal of furthering our understanding of the physiological, biochemical, molecular, and genetic mechanisms of this disease. This fellowship is designed to facilitate young investigators to obtain significant research experience as they initiate careers in PKD research. This program is intended to assure the continuity over time of outstanding investigators committed to the study of PKD.

Under this RFA, the PKD Foundation solicits research fellowship applications in the following areas:

- Basic research – to enhance understanding of molecular bases of PKD and its pathobiology
- Translational research – to accelerate development of predictive and therapeutic strategies for PKD
- Clinical research – such as small pilot studies
- Epidemiology/data analysis research – to conduct secondary data analyses utilizing existing database resources, or to develop new statistical methodologies or test hypotheses [using existing data](#)

The PKD Foundation encourages proposals in the following topic areas*:

- Autosomal Recessive PKD (ARPKD)
- ADPKD in children
- Innovative approaches to machine learning
- Lifestyle interventions (e.g., in dietary habits)
- Epidemiology/ data analysis (e.g., using [existing datasets](#))
- Extra-renal manifestations of PKD, including but not limited to congenital hepatic fibrosis, polycystic liver disease and intracranial aneurysms
- Clinical care disparities (e.g., race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, rural versus urban)
- Drug delivery mechanisms

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*Note that these areas of interest will not be scored preferentially during review.

Thanks to international PKD Foundation alliances, special consideration will be given to grant applications for research conducted in:

- Canada (made possible by a collaboration with the PKD Foundation of Canada)
- Australia (made possible by a collaboration with the PKD Australia)

Applicants must submit a pre-application to be considered for funding and will be notified in October as to whether they are invited to submit a full grant proposal. Full applications will not be accepted unless notification of invitation has been received from PKDF.

IMPORTANT DATES

PRE-APPLICATION SITE OPENS	July 1, 2025
PRE-APPLICATION DEADLINE	August 11, 2025 @ 5 PM CST
REVIEW PERIOD	August-October 2025
INVITATIONS TO SUBMIT FULL APPLICATIONS	October 2025
FULL APPLICATION DEADLINE	January 12, 2026 @ 5 PM CST
REVIEW PERIOD	January – May 2026
APPLICANT NOTIFICATION	May 2026
FUNDING CYCLE	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2028

Program Specifics

Eligibility Criteria

Fellows may submit a proposal that examines any aspect of polycystic kidney disease biology. Applicants must:

1. Hold an M.D. or Ph.D. or the equivalent degree at the time of the award.
2. May not have completed the equivalent of more than five years of research or post-doctoral training (excluding clinical training) after completion of M.D. or Ph.D. training at the time the award begins This does not include parental leave or FMLA.
3. May not hold a primary faculty position at time of award initiation, with the exception of “Instructor” or equivalent.
4. Complete research under the direction of a primary mentor and/or mentoring team.
5. Not hold another full fellowship award although internal institutional supplemental support is acceptable.

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6. Commit a minimum of 75% of time to **research and training** during the fellowship period.

Terms of Support

The Award of **\$70,000** per year will be provided for two years (grant total of **\$140,000**).

The funds awarded must be used solely for the purposes specified in the proposal submitted to and approved by the PKD Foundation as executed by the investigator and institution in strict compliance with the budget attached to the application. Future-year funding is dependent upon the availability of funds and interim research progress.

This funding opportunity has the following restrictions:

1. **No Indirect Costs are paid on this award.**
2. Any use of the award for salary support must be justified in the application.
3. Consultant costs cannot exceed \$10,000; equipment costs cannot exceed \$10,000.
4. No more than \$1,500 per year may be used for travel. More funds can be requested if intended to apply to PKDConnect Conference attendance.
5. Successful applicants may not hold any other research funding from the PKD Foundation at the time funding of this grant begins.
6. Applicants with existing funding from other sources (on which they are in the role of the lead investigator) will not be eligible to apply for this award, although internal institutional supplemental support is acceptable.
7. All current or potential funding must be disclosed at the time of application.

Application Review Procedures

The PKD Foundation strives to be transparent in relation to our decision-making processes. We rely on our grant review committees, who develop recommendations for funding, as well as the process we use as a Foundation to make funding decisions. Learn more [here](#).

Reporting Requirements

Grantees must submit an annual Progress Report to be submitted along with a Financial Report. As part of these reports, a brief (one or two paragraph) summary written for the lay public must be included. Although Research Grant and Fellowship Awards are for a two-year period, the PKD Foundation reserves the right to terminate any grant if there has been inadequate research progress during the first year of the award.



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Download the [PKDF Report Requirements](#).

Attribution

A stipulation to all awards is appropriate attribution of the PKD Foundation in any publication, news release, presentation, etc. that results from work funded by the award. The PKD Foundation must also receive a copy of the publication and/or news release.

Please use language similar to the following: *This research was funded by a grant from the Polycystic Kidney Disease Foundation, pkdcure.org. The Foundation had no role in study design, data collection and interpretation, or the decision to submit the work for publication.*

Intellectual Property Policy

All research projects funded by the PKD Foundation are subject to its intellectual property policy. By accepting a PKD Foundation award for a research project, the Principal Investigator or other personnel contributing to and working on the project, as well as the Institution(s) with which they are affiliated, agree to be bound by the terms and conditions of this policy.

Liability Policy & Reporting Responsibilities

The PKD Foundation serves as a grantor not a sponsor for research grant projects. For those involving human subjects, the responsibility for liability issues and all reporting requirements including local, state, and federal regulations and requirements including those of the FDA, will reside with the sponsoring institution, not the PKD Foundation.

Conflict of Interest

Any relationship between the investigators and any industrial collaborator must be disclosed in the application. Please either upload a PKD explaining the conflict in your application or contact research@pkdcure.org

Grants Policy Statement Regarding Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Prior to releasing funding, the PKD Foundation will require an Authorized Organizational Representative to certify by means of a signed letter on institutional letterhead, institutional commitment to ensuring:

1. Proper policies, procedures and oversight are in place to prevent discriminatory harassment and other discriminatory practices, and;

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2. Commitment to respond promptly and appropriately to allegations of discriminatory practices.

Failure to provide the signed letter will result in withdrawal of the application/funding.

The full Foundation policy can be found [here](#).

Proposal Central Application Portal

The PKD Foundation is using the Proposal Central platform to collect applications and track grantee outcomes. ORCID IDs will be required, to help the PKD Foundation track your future funding and publications in an effort to understand the impact of the PKD Foundation grant programs. If you already have an ORCID ID, some of your application and institutional information will be auto filled.

You will also be asked to provide institutional contacts, including your Signing Official, Financial Officer and Technology Transfer Officer. If your Institution already has a profile through Proposal Central, you will be able to select the contacts from those already listed. Contact the institution administrator if you have questions or the listed officials information needs to be updated.

Pre-Application Instructions

Applicants must submit a pre-application to be considered for funding and will be notified in October as to whether or not they are invited to submit a full grant proposal. Full applications will not be accepted unless notification of invitation has been received from the PKD Foundation.

Pre-application requirements:

1. Letter of Intent
 - a. Abstract (*3,500 characters with spaces*)
 - b. Summary of Research Project (*3,000 characters with spaces*)
 - c. Summary of Career Path (*3,000 characters with spaces*)
 - i. Brief summary of training to date, research interests/accomplishments, and career goals for PKD research
 - d. Mentor statement(*3,000 characters with spaces*)
 - i. Brief statement regarding the candidate's prior accomplishments and potential to succeed in PKD research and summary of training/mentoring plan
2. References (*one-page limit*)
3. Biosketch (*five-page limit*): new style NIH Biosketch [format](#). Include relevant details of applicant's career trajectory as related to this proposal.

*Also include a Biosketch for all key personnel.

Full Application Instructions

Applicants must submit a pre-application in order to be considered for funding and will be notified in October as to whether or not they are invited to submit full grant proposals. Full applications will not be accepted unless notification of invitation has been received from the PKD Foundation.



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1. Lay Summary/Impact Statement (*3,000 characters with spaces*): provide a statement written for the lay audience that addresses relevance to the stakeholder/patient community. Applications will be reviewed by both scientific and stakeholder reviewers.
2. Abstract (*3,000 characters*): describe your project in a scientific abstract that is understandable to a multidisciplinary group of scientific reviewers.
3. Specific aims and rationale (*one single page, uploaded as a PDF*); including relevance to PKD research
4. Research Plan: (*up to 3 pages, uploaded as a PDF*); including experimental design and pitfalls. Preliminary data is not required but may be provided if available.
5. References (*no page limit, uploaded as a PDF*); citations of relevant publications
6. Applicant Biosketch (*no page limit, uploaded as a PDF*): NIH style including other support
7. Mentor Biosketch (*no page limit, uploaded as a PDF*): NIH style including other support
8. Letters of Support (no page limit) including:
 1. Letter of support from mentor (should be the same person who submitted Biosketch); should include the following items in any order:
 1. Specific comment on the role the candidate had in preparing the application for research funding;
 2. A description of the training plan for the fellow during the fellowship years. Please include all plans for scientific training as well as professional development;
 3. A description of the training environment;
 4. Is the fellow likely to pursue a career in research?
 5. How will the proposed research provide the applicant with the necessary skills and training to pursue an independent research career after the training period?
 6. What are the future career expectations for the applicant?
 7. In addition, the letter should detail the applicant's previous training to allow assessment of eligibility and career potential.
 8. The mentor should describe their experience in training post-doctoral applicants.

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2. Two additional letters of reference (no page limit): These letters should be written by individuals familiar with the candidate's scientific interests and abilities.
9. Budget: include all line-items to be paid for by PKD Foundation funds. No indirect costs can be included in this budget.
10. Signed IRB Approval and summary of clinical protocol (or letter confirming that IRB approval will be obtained before start of project/funds are awarded), if applicable (*single page*)
11. Signed IACUC Approval of animal use protocol (or letter confirming that IACUC approval will be obtained before start of project/funds are awarded), if applicable (can be pending but must be approved by the time the funds are awarded)

Formatting Requirements

Font size and types, margins and line spacing requirements are necessary to ensure readability. Applications that do not strictly adhere to the following guidelines will be administratively withdrawn.

- **Font size:** Must be 11 points or larger. Smaller text in figures, graphs, diagrams, and charts is acceptable, as long as it is clearly legible when the page is viewed at 100%.
 - Some PDF conversion software reduces the font size. It is important to confirm that the final PDF document complies with the font requirements.
- **Text fonts:** please use one of the following:
 - Arial
 - Georgia
 - Helvetica
- **Page margins:** 1-inch margins from top, bottom, left and right aspects of each page.
- **Line spacing:** No more than six lines per vertical inch (e.g., text using Arial font size 11 would need to be at least single (1.0) spaced).
- **Text color:** No restriction. Though not required, black or other high-contrast text colors are recommended since they print well and are legible to the largest audience.

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For general guidance how to structure and write a grant application consider
NIH resources (e.g., [Format and Write Applications](#) or [Research Forms](#))

If you have questions, please contact research@pkdcure.org

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