Request for Applications:

NYSCF – Robertson Neuroscience Investigator Awards

NYSCF is soliciting applications from early career investigators for awards in neuroscience. The goal of this initiative is to foster innovative, emerging scientists whose pioneering approaches have the potential to transform the field of neuroscience.

For the 2022 application cycle, applicants are invited to apply from all fields in neuroscience. NYSCF is committed to supporting a broad range of neuroscience research areas representative of the field, taking into account the immense progress and changes in the field in the last decade. To that end, NYSCF especially encourages applications from neuroscientists whose research areas may be under-supported by traditional funding mechanisms and/or underrepresented in the field as a whole (see examples on next page) or by previous recipients of the Awards.

Applicants can, but need not, be working in stem cells or related areas.

This career development award provides up to $1.5 million in flexible funding over 5 years. No institutional overhead is provided. NYSCF will accept applications from researchers based at domestic and international accredited non-profit research and academic institutions.

You can learn more and find out how to apply at:
www.nyscf.org/neuroaward

All applications must be submitted in the online portal before
5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time on February 16th, 2022
to be put forward for review.

EXPANDING THE BREADTH OF NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH SUPPORTED THROUGH THESE AWARDS

The NYSCF – Robertson Neuroscience Investigator Awards have supported innovative scientists for over a decade, and the field of neuroscience has advanced significantly over this time. In recognition of these advancements and the many exciting new areas of neuroscience that have arisen, NYSCF seeks to expand the breadth of research that it supports through these awards in the coming years.

Applicants are invited to apply from all fields of neuroscience in the 2022 application cycle. We especially encourage applications from neuroscientists conducting substantial research in emerging, dynamic and/or underfunded research areas and with technologies that have the potential to be transformative for the field at large, for example in the fields of:

- **neurodevelopment**
- **neuroimmunology**
- **cognitive neuroscience**
- **imaging**
- **neurogenomics**
- **human genetics**
- **psychiatry and mental health research**
- **epidemiological or population-level studies using real-world human data**
- **disease modeling**
- **disease research in humans or on human populations**

NYSCF is eager to broaden the neuroscience research supported through these awards. That being said, **applicants will be evaluated first and foremost on scientific merit and the transformative potential of their research for the neuroscience field, regardless of their research area**.

Applicants can, but need not, be working in stem cells or related areas.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING (DEIB)

NYSCF is committed to fostering diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in STEM. Overcoming the impact of systematic racism, sexism, and other discrimination that has systematically marginalized certain groups from STEM research is critical for a productive, innovative scientific community. NYSCF strongly encourages applications from scientists of all ethnicities, cultures, religions, nationalities, abilities and disabilities, sexes, gender identities, sexual orientations, geographic locations, and socioeconomic statuses. New this year, we invite applicants to (optionally) self-identify as part of any systematically marginalized groups in STEM and to describe how this identity may have impacted their scientific career, to help us stay true to our commitment to increasing diversity in applicants and awardees and accounting for any undue adversity they may have faced. We also now require applicants to demonstrate their commitment to DEIB by describing any efforts or activities they are involved in that support DEIB in their own labs, institutes, or the broader STEM field.

Additionally, to help benchmark the state of gender equity in research institutions worldwide, we require all applicants to our grant programs to complete the Institutional Report Card for Gender Equity. The data submitted will not impact how your application is evaluated, but the report card must be submitted for the application to be considered complete. Details and FAQs can be found here.

AWARD BENEFITS

Successful applicants will join the NYSCF Innovators Community, a global group of over 200 outstanding early career scientists and postdoctoral fellows based at institutions around the world including NYSCF Research Institute scientists and engineers. Additionally, they will attend the annual NYSCF Conference as well as an annual scientific retreat, exclusive to the NYSCF – Robertson Investigators, NYSCF – Druckenmiller Fellows, and NYSCF Research Institute Scientists.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible, applicants must:
- Have completed one or more of the following degrees: MD, PhD, DPhil
- Be within 6 years of starting a faculty (professorship) or comparable position on June 1, 2022
  (Note: an additional year of eligibility was added as a result of the COVID-19 crisis)
- Independently supervise a research team as head of group/laboratory
- Have a publication record containing articles that are innovative and high impact

In addition, since routes to independence vary significantly outside of the United States, **applicants based at institutions outside the United States** should consider all of the following when assessing their eligibility:
- Do you write grants in your own name?
- Are you or will you be the senior author on publications from your current lab?
- Do you have responsibility for independently recruiting and supervising a research team?

If the answer to all these questions is yes, and the applicant has also met the other eligibility criteria, they may be eligible to apply. Please contact NYSCF Staff if you require additional information on eligibility at neuroscienceinvestigators@nyscf.org.

There is no limit to the number of times applicants can apply within their eligibility period, and there is no limit on the number of applications that can be submitted each year per institution or department.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Please note this is a career development award, not a project-specific award, and funds may be used at the discretion of awardees to increase the impact of their research, subject to the terms of the award letter.

Formatting Requirements: All PDF uploads must use 0.5-inch margins and a minimum font size of 11 points. Smaller text in figures, tables, and captions is appropriate, as long as it is legible when the page is viewed at 100%. Please use adequate type density, line spacing, and font choice to ensure legibility.

Application Requirements: Below is a comprehensive, but non-exhaustive, list of application requirements. Please visit the application portal to preview the entire application.

Administrative Components

- **Demographic information**. Contact details, demographic information, and other relevant administrative information. (text boxes)
- **Other support**. Please provide details of other secured and pending financial support using this template. (PDF upload)
- **Compliance documentation**. All applications must provide assurance of compliance with local research regulatory bodies and with local laws in advance of the award start date. Additionally, for applications using human embryonic stem cells, human tissue, or human trials, the applicants must obtain appropriate Embryonic Stem Cell Research Oversight Committee (ESCRO) and human subjects research approvals in advance of the award start date. (PDF upload)

Scientific Components

- **Vision Statement**. Summarize your central research directions, vision for your research program, and its potential impact on the field of neuroscience. (1-page maximum; PDF upload)
- **Research Plan**. Although this is not a project-specific award, we request that you provide a proposal that exemplifies the types of projects being undertaken in your lab. Include sections on background/motivation, preliminary data, detailed aims (containing experimental design, analysis plan, consideration of outcomes), timeline, and potential to transform the field. (7-page maximum including figures/tables and excluding references; PDF upload)
- **Specific Aims Page**. A 1-page summary of the specific aims for the research plan that describes the problem or gap in knowledge being addressed, brief summaries of the aims, and the expected innovation, outcomes, and impact of the project. (1-page maximum; PDF upload)
- **NIH biosketch** formatted according to current NIH guidelines. Click here to download the current template. Please use the non-fellowship biosketch version for applications submitted after January 25, 2022. Please include your four most significant publications in the Personal Statement of the biosketch, where they typically are placed. (5-page total maximum; PDF upload)

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)

- **Self-identification (optional)**. New this year, we provide a section in which you may self-identify as a member of any systematically marginalized group in STEM (yes/no) and can also choose to describe that identity and/or how it may have affected your career. This section is intended to help us accurately estimate the diversity of our applicant pool as part of our commitment to increasing the diversity of applicants and awardees, and to enable reviewers to account for any undue adversity faced by applicants as a result of their identities. (250-word maximum; text box)

- **Commitment to DEIB**. Describe any of your past or current efforts and activities to foster diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in your lab, institute, or the field in general. These activities will be considered as additional merits to scientific accomplishments and potential. (250-word maximum; text box)

- **Institutional Report Card for Gender Equality**. To help benchmark the state of gender equity in research institutions worldwide, we require all applicants to our grant programs to complete this institutional report card. Please note that this will require significant input from your department/institution. The data submitted will not impact how your application is evaluated, but the report card must be submitted for the application to be considered complete. Details and FAQs can be found [here](#).

Reference Letters

- **Reference letters**. Please request letters of reference from your department chair and two other referees. All letters must be submitted through the portal by the application deadline.
  - Department chair: this letter should speak to your department's/institution's commitment to you, the dedicated institutional resources they have provided you, and how they plan to support your research program and career.
    - Note: For applicants **based at institutions outside the US**, please also include confirmation of the applicant's eligibility, good standing, and that, if selected, the applicant would be able to accept the award.
  - Two referees of your choice: Applicants typically include letters from PhD and/or postdoc supervisors, but we encourage you to choose the best equipped referees to speak to your track record, potential for future success, and your likelihood to make an impact on the field.
- **Selection Rationale**. Please explain your choice of referees. (250 word maximum; text box).

TIMELINE

2022

- February 16: Deadline to submit an application
- June: Finalist notified and interviews; non-finalist applicants notified of funding decisions
- June (approximate): Interviewees notified of funding decisions
- October: Awardees announced at NYSCF Conference

2023

- January: Award funding begins