KidneyCure

The ASN Foundation CureKidneyDiseases.org

Transition to Independence Grants

Guidelines and Application Instructions

Only active ASN members are eligible to apply. Check your membership status here.

Applicants may only submit one application during a cycle.

KidneyCure will make an Award solely in accordance with KidneyCure policies, payment, and schedule regulations as described in the original Notice of Award and Grant Stipulations.

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

Purpose

The KidneyCure Transition to Independence Grants Program provides funding for early career faculty to foster an independent research career. The successful applicant should be competitive to become a principal investigator on a National Institutes of Health (NIH) R01 grant or equivalent by the end of the grant period.

Eligibility

Please note that the eligibility criteria have been updated. Please read carefully. Significant updates in bold.

The eligibility window for applicants to apply is determined by the years since their last terminal degree at the time the application cycle closes on Thursday, November 20, 2025. **Note that the eligibility window excludes residency and clinical fellowship training years.** Over 70% of time should be spent on clinical training for a year to be considered “clinical fellowship training”.

- **Applicants with PhDs or MD/PhDs have a 10-year eligibility window to apply.**
- **Applicants with clinical degrees (e.g. MDs, DOs, DVMs, PharmDs) have a 12-year eligibility window to apply.**

Exceptions to the eligibility windows will be considered on a case-by-case basis using criteria outlined in the Extension Requests section.

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

- Must be working in North or Central America, or the Caribbean during the grant period.
- Must be an active member of ASN. **Check your membership status here.**
- Must hold an MD, DO, PhD, DVM, PharmD 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 (as PI or co-PI) of a National Institutes of Health R01 grant, VA Merit Award, or equivalent.
- Should propose a project that will be viewed as independent of previous mentors.

- **Cannot have more than $250,000 (in annual direct costs) in internal or external competitive grant support, excluding KidneyCure funds, at the time of the award activation.**
- Must devote at least 75% of their time to research.
- Must have full-time faculty appointment confirmed in writing by the Department Chair, indicating the date of first full-time faculty appointment.
- Must have obtained an institutional commitment that is sufficient to conduct independent research (laboratory and office space, salary support, and at least 75% protected research time) confirmed in writing by the Department Chair.

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 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. All parents, including those who adopt, are eligible for this particular extension.

To be submit an extension request, please email grants@asn-online.org prior to the application deadline.

Previous or Current Funding Allowed

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 R01 grant, VA Merit Award, or equivalent. **Total competitive (internal or external) grant funding, excluding the KidneyCure Transition to Independence Grant, cannot exceed $250,000 in annual direct costs.** 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, 2026, 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.
- Research must begin on July 1, 2026; research start dates cannot be deferred.
- 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 and Personnel: Funds may be used for research supplies and to support the salary of research staff.
- 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 per 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; maximum of 5 pages)
    a. The biosketch must list relevant full-length publications or articles in press (not abstracts or manuscripts in preparation, submitted, or in revision) of the applicant and the 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 C. Contributions to Science.
III. Research Project Plan using the KidneyCure provided template (Maximum of nine and a half pages total, not including Literature Cited 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 any professional responsibilities/activities including other research projects. Explain how these responsibilities/activities will help you 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. Literature Cited
    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. **Additional Funding Disclosure** (if applicable, one page maximum).
        i. Mandatory if you have current extramural (NIH, KidneyCure, or other) or competitive intramural grant funding.

ii. For each grant, provide the following: 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 or will hold a full-time faculty appointment prior to the start of the grant term (including the month/year of the appointment and 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 from the institution documenting permission to submit the application (this letter should be submitted by an institution or department official/representative).
   a. The letter must include a statement 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. (Letter Documenting Permission to Submit) must be combined into one document for upload to the application. This document should be uploaded to the "Department Chair" field. Additional letters will not be reviewed.

VI. Three (3) Reference Letters
   a. Letters must be submitted prior to the application deadline and cannot be edited once submitted.
   b. 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. Applicants cannot submit the letters.

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 format 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.
- Applications must follow the maximum page limits described in Sections II.-III. to be considered eligible.

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 for. 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 referees).
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.

In order to give referees ample time to submit letters of recommendation, it is suggested an applicant upload placeholder documents to proceed to the referee email section.

VIII. Enter the email address of three (3) referees. Each referee 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 referees cannot be changed once the application is submitted. Please enter email addresses early in the application process to allow referees to submit letters prior to the deadline.*
IX. Once you enter all referee 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 invitations, and view the number of reference letters submitted. Changes to the project title and keywords must be requested via email (grants@asn-online.org).

Clicking submit will save the application. **Applicants should secure all referees prior to submission as referee 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 Literature Cited 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)
  - Literature Cited
  - Resubmission Defense (1 page maximum)
- ✓ Upload letter from Department Chair and letter documenting Permission to Submit
- ✓ Send emails to three referees for letters of support

Evaluation Criteria and Process

The KidneyCure Grants Review Committee will consider the potential of the applicant to be competitive for NIH R01 grant funding or its equivalent by the end of the grant period. 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