



HDSA
BERMAN/TOPPER FAMILY
HUNTINGTON'S DISEASE
CAREER DEVELOPMENT FELLOWSHIP

2026
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

HDSA Berman/Topper Family Huntington's Disease Career Development Fellowship

Important Dates and Deadlines

Request for proposals published:	December, 2025
Online portal opens:	December, 2025
Complete applications due:	March 20, 2026
Scientific Advisory Board review:	Early May 2026
Notification of award:	Late May 2026
Fellowship start date:	no later than August 1, 2026

Program Goal

Developing the leading Huntington's disease (HD) scientists of the future.

Statement of Need

An uncertain NIH budget and lack of career development mechanisms for young HD researchers has led to an environment where the funding opportunities for young HD researchers are limited. The Huntington's Disease Society of America (HDSA) believes we must ensure that the pipeline of passionate and bright HD scientists and clinicians remains full, a vision that is shared by the Berman and Topper families. With that in mind and with their support, HDSA is interested in sponsoring innovative lines of scientific inquiry into HD biology by young researchers with a desire in making HD part of their career plan.

Eligibility

Fellows: Applications are welcome from young scientists/clinicians who are interested in a career in Huntington's disease research and/or care. Applicants should be no more than 5 years removed from obtaining their PhD. Applicants with an MD/DO should be no more than 5 years removed from completing their residency/fellowship at the time of application. Applicants cannot have their own laboratory and must identify an individual who will serve as his or her mentor and supervisor. Applications from institutions all around the world are welcomed.

Mentors: All applicants must have an established mentor who has a PhD and/or MD/DO degree and be a clinical and/or research investigator with a well-documented history of accomplishments in the HD field. All mentors must have primary appointments at academic, public or private, non-profit research institutions. Applications from the for-profit sector will not be accepted.

Application

All types (i.e., basic, translational or clinical) of HD research proposals are eligible for funding in this program. Research proposals with the highest potential scientific impact on HD will be most highly regarded.

HDSA will also place a very strong emphasis on the quality of the applicant and their outlined career development plan that must be developed in collaboration with a mentor who is an established HD researcher/clinician.

All applications must be accompanied by the curriculum vitae of the applicant, a letter from the applicant's mentor that evaluates the significance of the research to be conducted and high potential of the researcher and additional letters of reference (up to three). Proposals must be submitted as three-year projects.

Review

All applications will be reviewed by the HDSA Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). All applications will be scored, using the following three individual criteria:

1. The strength/uniqueness of the applicant's career development plan
2. Potential impact of the scientific research proposal
3. Qualities of applicant

More than 50 percent of the emphasis will be placed on the first criterion which is the strength/uniqueness of the applicant's career development plan.

Awards

The HDSA Berman/Topper Family HD Career Development Fellowship will be provided as salary and research support (up to \$100,000/year) for new clinical, translational or basic HD biology research projects for a potential of \$300,000 per three-year award.

The award will include a competitive stipend up to \$95,000 to cover salary, fringe benefits (up to 30% of salary), research costs, supplies, and educational costs such as books or training courses. An additional \$5,000 per year travel allowance is available to ensure the Fellow can attend the relevant HD conferences (i.e., HDSA Annual Convention, CHDI Therapeutics Conference, CAG Gordon Conference) that are important for their development. HDSA cannot cover the purchase of laboratory equipment or data storage devices. Budgetary items submitted with the proposal will be reviewed by HDSA and **any exceptions must be justified and discussed prior to submission**. Consistent with HDSA policy, indirect costs, such as institutional overhead, are not allowed.

Fellows are permitted to obtain additional awards or grants to cover additional salary and research expenses as needed. **However, it is required that all HDSA Berman/Topper Family HD Career Development Fellows dedicate at least 80% effort to the proposal. Fellows must also inform HDSA of additional sources of income obtained during the award period and must communicate in advance regarding any changes in position or institution.**

Terms

The recipient of any fellowship from HDSA must use the awarded funds for the specific purpose they were originally intended. Each year, funds not used in the above specified manner must be returned to HDSA within 60 days of the receipt of the annual financial reconciliation report by HDSA. Payment of the awards is contingent on receiving any institutional approvals (IRB or IACUC) that are required for the proposed research. Any changes to the proposed budget during the award period must be discussed with HDSA.

Annual awards will be paid in quarterly installments. The first payment totaling 25% of the first-year budget will be made to the researcher's institution upon acceptance of the HDSA award terms and conditions, including receipt of all required certifications by a post-award official authorized to act for the institution receiving the award. Subsequent payments will be made to the fellow's institution each quarter following the receipt and acceptance of a progress report from the awardee. Second- and third-year continuation of support for the project will be contingent upon HDSA receiving a detailed annual progress report, as well as an annual financial reconciliation report from the investigator. Annual reports must be received by HDSA no later than 30 days after the grant year-end date.

The funds cannot be used to purchase laboratory equipment, nor does the award cover indirect costs. The HD Career Development Fellowships are not renewable and non-transferable. A fellowship award may not be transferred to another investigator, laboratory or sponsoring institution. However, if, during the course of the fellowship, the recipient is promoted to a tenure-track position at their current/sponsoring institution, they can continue to receive the fellowship funds. All HDSA Berman/Topper Family Career Development Fellows must use the travel budget provided to attend at least one HDSA National Convention during the course of their three-year training. All publications resulting from research funded by HDSA must acknowledge the *Huntington's Disease Society of America* and should be provided to HDSA when in-press.

All IRB approved projects selected for funding that involve the recruitment of study participants must complete the HD TrialFinder Listing Request Form available on www.HDSA.org. This information will be used to list the clinical study in HDSA's HD TrialFinder (www.HDTrialfinder.org) that aims to match interested trial participants with HD research studies around North America.

Sharing Research Results: Twenty-four months after the award end date, HDSA may share the results (including raw data) of the funded research with third parties without restrictions. Before that time, HDSA can share the results (including raw data) of the funded research with third parties under a confidentiality agreement which will require such third parties to not publish any results they generate using the results of the funded research until twenty-four months after the award end date. Finally, by accepting funds from HDSA, awardees also agree to make (and agree HDSA may make) the raw data of the funded research **freely** available for inclusion in data repositories in a timely fashion.

Institutional Approvals: Human Participants and Vertebrate Animal Certifications must be documented with a copy of an official letter of approval (or equivalent for non-US applicants), which identifies the Principal Investigator, project title and date of approval, and is signed by the Review Committee Chair or equivalent responsible institutional/government official. Prior certification for another project cannot be substituted but can be officially amended to include the proposed project (identified by project title).

IMPORTANT: IRB, IACUC or equivalent ethical certification are NOT required to submit an application; however, such ethical certification must be submitted as soon as possible following official notification of an award. HDSA will not issue a grant until the appropriate certifications are received.

Projects using postmortem tissue must provide documentation that the necessary tissue is or will be available at the research site at the time of the award. Applications without proper documentation will be returned without review.

Public Access/Dissemination

Funded researchers are also required to submit or have submitted for them to the National Institutes of Health's PubMed Central database an electronic version of their final, peer-reviewed manuscripts upon acceptance for publication, to be made publicly available no later than 12 months after the official date of

publication. This requirement applies to all grants awarded after January 1, 2013, whether HDSA funds the research in whole or in part.

HDSA reserves the right to make information about funded awards publicly available.

Supporting Documents

Applications *must* be accompanied by a letter from project supervisor/mentor of the department in which the work will be done, evaluating the significance of the research to be conducted and potential of the researcher. Special attention should be given to how the mentor will ensure the development of the applicant into a leading HD scientist. Proposals involving human research participants must indicate any potential risks (physical or psychological).

Copies of the certified consent form and approval from the sponsoring Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of research participants must accompany the application. If the proposals also include a portion of research involving use of animals, you must include a statement certifying compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws, and conformity with and adherence to the Animal Welfare Act, the National Research Council Guide for the Care & Use of Laboratory Animals, and any appropriate US Department of Agriculture or National Institutes of Health (NIH) regulations and standards.

A completed application in [the online portal](#) includes the following:

- Administrative Information (for applicant, mentor, and university official)
- Budget and Other Support (budget for this project and other current support)
- Research and Training Plan (summary of aims, background, preliminary data, experimental plan, expected milestones, career development plan, personal statement, citations)
- Reference Letters/Institutional Approvals (mentor letter of support, additional optional reference letters, IRB/IACUC/animal welfare documentation if applicable)

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