SNS Neurosurgeon-Scientist Training Program (NSTP)
Year 1 Application

Background and General Program Structure

The Society of Neurological Surgeons has established a two-year Neurosurgeon-Scientist Training Program (NSTP) to increase the pool of neurosurgery residents conducting research and to enhance their success rate in becoming independent neurosurgeon-scientists. Additional research by clinician-scientist neurosurgeons is critical to the fundamental discovery that advances new methods of care and new cures. The NSTP will serve as a formal mentored research program for those neurosurgery residents who are beginning a protected research year or who have already completed their protected research year. The primary goal of this new program is to provide participants with the skills, mentorship, education, and experience needed to successfully compete for individual research funding (e.g., NIH K award and R01 grants) and launch productive research careers. Awardees have access to neurosurgeon-scientist mentors through a national network organization and will participate in the Annual NINDS R25 workshop.

Applicants will submit a written application to the program and be interviewed at the AANS meeting by a selection committee. It is anticipated that up to 4-5 candidates per year will be selected based on the application process. Selected residents beginning their protected year of research in Year 1 of the NSTP program will be provided a travel stipend to attend the CNS and NINDS R25 Workshops in the fall and spring, respectively. All those selected for support in year 1 will be assigned a central NSTP mentor, who will work synergistically with the awardee's local mentor to guide the awardee. **All awardees who complete year 1 of the program will be eligible to apply for funding to support continuation of their research project in the year after their year 1 support (i.e., year 2).** Residents are eligible for continued support in year 2 whether they are continuing with protected research time or going back into clinical training full time. The key to obtaining research support in year 2 will be making good progress in their research during year 1, clear plans for use of the year 2 funding and a well-considered, specific plan to successfully use the year 2 funding to help transition to a K award application.

The request for proposals (RFP) will be launched in January 2023. Each year, applicant interviews for entry into year 1 will be completed during the annual AANS meeting in the spring and award winners will be announced in May. Applicant interviews for entry into year 2 will be completed at the NINDS R25 meeting in the spring. The NSTP start date for both years 1 and 2 will be July 1.

- **With this announcement, applications are being accepted for admission to Year 1 of the NSTP program from individuals who will be starting a 12-month period of protected time for research in July 2023.**
- **For all submissions and any questions, please email Costas Hadjipanayis, MD, PhD, at hadjipanayiscg2@upmc.edu.**
- **Applications are currently being accepted with a focus on brain tumors, cerebrovascular, and functional disorders. Applications should include the following information. All information should be included in a single pdf file, in the order listed below, and uploaded to the SNS website here: https://www.societyns.org/nstp-application-year-1. Logging onto the SNS website is required to gain access to the submission page. If you do not have an account on the SNS website, create the "Create An Account" button on the log-in page.**

YEAR 1 APPLICATION INFORMATION (2023)

- **Application Due:** March 1, 2023
- **Candidate Interviews:** AANS meeting, Spring 2023
- **Notification of Awardees:** May 2023
- **Start Date in NSTP Program:** July 1, 2023
- **Applications will only be considered for those starting a 12-month protected year of research on July 1, 2023**
- **Awards will consist of $2500 for travel to the annual CNS meeting (Fall 2023) and NINDS R25 meeting (Spring 2024).**
  - **4-page application**, written by resident, consisting of research plan, training plan, plan to get to an NIH K award (includes timing of entire research activity /clinical activity from application date to end of residency) and the general expectation for the K research project, and how the proposed research will lead to the anticipated K award project.
    - First 3 pages must include the specific aims, background/significance, research plan for each specific aim that includes: methods, statistical approach, expected results, pitfalls/alternatives, plan to minimize experimental and analytical bias and how the proposed research will lead to future research direction.
    - The final page should describe a gap-based career development plan (includes mentorship plan, institutional support, and plan for a K award that incorporates timing of research/clinical activity)
    - Bibliography page is not included in the 4-page limit
  - **References**: Maximum of 3.
  - **Candidate Biosketch**
    - **Biosketch for each mentor**: should include a personal statement specifically relevant to this application.
  - **Mentor(s) letter**: One letter from all mentors should describe the mentoring/training plan, how the mentor intends to help the candidate get to a K award, description of ownership of project by candidate, description of intellectual contribution of candidate to project. The mentor cannot simply have the candidate working on an on-going project that cannot be turned into an original project by the candidate to apply for a K award. If the proposed project did originate with the mentor, a clear description of how this project will lead to a K award project fully owned by the candidate must be clearly explained.
  - **Mentor(s) roles and qualifications description document**
    - **Chair letter** must commit to providing applicant with a minimum of 80% research effort for 12 months, provided as 4 full days Monday through Friday, during Year 1

The SNS will not provide research funding during Year 1. Consequently, either the Chair or mentor must describe where the money will come from to support the proposed research project (e.g., the active grant or specific source of funding). Institutional support will be needed for Year 1 protected research year.

Application Process: Applications are currently being accepted with a focus on brain tumors, cerebrovascular, and functional disorders. All information should be included in a single pdf file, in the order listed above, and uploaded on the SNS website here: https://www.societyns.org/nstp-application-year-1. Logging onto the SNS website is required to gain access to the submission page. If you do not have an account on the SNS website, create the "Create An Account" button on the log-in page.

NSTP Highlights:

- Start date in NSTP program is July 2023.
- An NSTP core review committee will review applications, interview candidates, and make selection decisions.
- All awardees will work with both their local mentor and a central mentor associated with the NSTP program
- Year 1 selection interviews will be completed at the AANS meeting
- Year 1 will include funding ($2,500) for attendance at 2 national meetings (CNS and NINDS R25 Workshop).
- Year 2 selection interviews will be completed at the NINDS R25 Workshop
- Year 2 funding (up to $50K) will be provided via a competitive application process. **Selection into Year 2 of the NSTP program, and research funds provided, will be determined via evaluation of a written application and interview process in the spring of Year 1 at the NINDS R25 Workshop.**
- For those applicants who are completing a protected year of research at the time of application, they will be eligible to enroll into the NSTP for 1 year with funding.