AJINOMOTO YOUNG INVESTIGATOR PILOT GRANT

Pilot grants are stipends for preliminary or pilot phases of young investigators' research projects. These grants support an investigator's efforts to address focused research questions, obtain preliminary data to support larger grant proposals in the future, and develop a line of research that can be carried forward into an academic career.

Glutamic acid is the most abundant amino acid in nature. In its free form, glutamic acid binds to a specific taste receptor on the tongue imparting the fifth basic taste of umami. Monosodium glutamate (MSG) is the sodium salt of glutamic acid and the most common source of glutamate in the food supply. In addition to providing umami flavor, prior research has shown that MSG can reduce the sodium content of foods up to 40% without sacrificing taste and pleasantness. This could have a meaningful impact on public health given intakes of sodium in the U.S. far exceed recommendations.

Glutamic acid, mediated through modulation of glutaminergic receptors in the gastrointestinal tract, may also play a role in gut and brain function through the gut-brain axis. These functions of glutamic acid are far less understood than its sensory properties in food.

This award provides a one-time $10,000 pilot grant for a young investigator to pursue human research that advances the understanding of dietary glutamic acid and/or it's sodium salt, under healthy or therapeutic conditions, particularly as it relates to sodium reduction and/or the gut-brain axis. No indirect costs are allowed.

Special thanks to Ajinomoto Health & Nutrition North America, Inc. for providing funding for this award.

The deadline for applications is **January 28, 2022**.

Any questions, please contact awards@nutrition.org.

Application and Selection Process

All applications must be submitted via the ASN Foundation Portal. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

Confidential selection juries are appointed each year. Juries rate the candidates based on the award criteria. A jury can determine that there are no deserving candidates in a given year.

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be an ASN member residing in the United States
- Be junior faculty (within 10 years of terminal degree)
- Have demonstrated an interest in amino acid nutrition, cardiovascular nutrition, sensory science, or behavioral health

Application Guidelines

The following information will be required during the application process.

- Applicant contact information
- Program director contact information
- Letter of recommendation author contact information
- Application information
    - Confirmation of applicant's ASN membership status
    - Proposed research project information:
        - Proposed research project title (150 character limit without spaces)
        - Proposed research project dates (anticipated start and completion dates)
    - Statement: Statement written for a non-scientific audience, explaining the contribution of the proposed research to knowledge in nutrition. Tables, images and/or graphs should not be included or referenced in the Statement. (3,500 character limit without spaces, approximately one single-spaced typewritten page)
    - Summary: Summary of your proposed research project including objective, experimental approach and selected references. Up to 4 tables, images and/or graphs can be included to supplement the Summary. Tables, images and/or graphs (uploaded as image files in .jpg, .png, .gif or .bmp format) will appear separate from and following the Summary text. (14,000 character limit without spaces, approximately four single-spaced typewritten pages)
- Required uploads (in PDF format)
    - A letter of recommendation from a program director or other faculty member
    - Curriculum vitae of the applicant