

**Guideline for the Texas A&M University,
Texas A&M AgriLife Research and
the Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station
*Texas A&M NRSA Part-time Employment Program (TPEP) for
NIH NRSA Postdoctoral Fellowships***

Note: This serves as a revised guideline to the Texas A&M University NRSA Part-time Employment Program (USEP) being revised in accordance with NOT-OD-095: Additional Guidance on Full-time Training for Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards; Issued by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Release Date: July 24, 2017. The July notice provided additional guidance from NIH as to the amount of time that an NRSA can be employed as a part-time employee.

Purpose:

Texas A&M University (TAMU), together with Texas A&M AgriLife Research (AgriLife) and the Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station (TEES), strive to enhance, support, and promote the postdoctoral experience on campus by providing an administrative environment conducive to the recruitment, training and professional growth of superb postdoctoral fellows. The NIH Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Services Awards (NRSA) offers a unique opportunity to recruit postdoctoral fellows through these highly competitive and prestigious NIH awards to Texas A&M (TAMU, AgriLife, and TEES). As current NIH requirements do not allow the NRSA training experience to be provided via an employer-employee relationship, many times recipients of these prestigious fellowships are afforded less accessibility to benefits and services than a postdoctoral researcher paid as an employee. As NRSA awards are highly valued, the Texas A&M NRSA Part-time Employment Program (TPEP) is established to provide an opportunity for the NIH NRSA fellowship recipient to have part-time employment incidental to the training program to offset further expenses and to allow greater accessibility to benefits and services offered to Texas A&M postdoctoral employees.

Eligibility and Restrictions for Texas A&M Supplemental Part-Time Employment for NIH NRSA Postdoctoral Fellows:

- NRSA fellowship must be funded by NIH NRSA Award Program
- NRSA fellowship award must be made to AgriLife, TAMU or TEES and not to the individual fellowship holder or to another grantee.
- NRSA fellowship must be for postdoctoral training only
- Compensation associated with the part-time employment for NRSA postdoctoral fellows may not be paid from another sponsored research grant as there is a prohibition against employment that supports the same research that is part of the fellow's planned training experience as approved on the NRSA individual fellowship application
- Compensation associated with the part-time employment may not be paid from another federal source of funds
- Under no circumstances may the conditions of the services provided for the compensation interfere with, detract from, or prolong the fellow's approved NRSA training program. Per NIH NRSA Policy, "all fellows are required to pursue their research training full time.

Full-time is generally defined as devoting at least 40 hours per week to research training activities or as specified by the sponsoring institution in accordance with its own policies. Any request to reduce the NRSA training commitment to less than 40 hours a week will not be approved to accommodate other sources of funding, job opportunities, clinical practice, clinical training, or responsibilities associated with the fellow's position at the sponsoring institution."

- To be eligible for the Texas A&M NRSA TPEP, NRSA fellowship holders cannot serve as Principal Investigator (PI) as part of the part-time employment as the principal duties will be to the NRSA training program. Exceptions would be granted if the NRSA Fellow was applying for a K99/R00 (NIH Pathway to Independence (PI) Award. In these situations the NRSA support would need to be stopped prior to receiving PI awards from one of these programs.
- In accordance with the NIH NOT-OD-17-095 dated July 24, 2017, as referenced above, "Fellows and trainees may engage in part-time employment incidental to their training. Fellows and trainees may spend on average, an additional 25% of their time (e.g., 10 hours per week) in part time research, teaching or clinical employment, so long as those activities do not interfere with, or lengthen, the duration of their NRSA training."

Accessibility/Services/Benefits of the Part-Time Employment Opportunity:

As a part-time employee at 25% time, the postdoctoral fellow will be eligible, as applicable, for the following:

- 1) social security credit and employer matching,
- 2) creditable state service with the State of Texas,
- 3) eligibility for worker's compensation and unemployment
- 4) University access to library, email, parking, etc.

At 25% time, employees are not eligible for employer paid health insurance but as postdoctoral fellow receiving a stipend from an applicable fellowships, fellows are eligible for the Texas A&M group insurance program and premiums can be paid by the individual from funds paid to the them via the NRSA stipend or from funds earned via the TPEP.

As part-time employees, these fellows will no longer be required to follow procedures and classifications as non-employees and will be eligible for privileges afforded to other postdoctoral research associates on payroll and/or part-time employees. The part-time employment status will address the following:

- 1) Requiring non-employees to sign waivers of liability, releasing Texas A&M from all responsibility as an unpaid volunteer
- 2) Requiring non-employees to submit separate Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI) disclosure paperwork instead of having access to the FCOI automated system used by employees
- 3) Being omitted from the Texas A&M Human Resources, Payroll and other systems that omit non-employee postdoctoral fellows delaying stipends among other issues
- 4) Being treated differently in regard to intellectual property due to non-employment status

Financial Assistance for the TPEP from TAMU Office of the Vice President for Research (TAMU/OVPR), AgriLife, or TEES:

TPEP part-time positions for the eligible NRSA postdoctoral fellows will be established as follows:

Title: Postdoctoral Research Associate

Salary Rate: \$34.50 per hour for a maximum of 10 hours per week (25% time) (Note: The FTE rate is approximately \$6000/per month/100% time.)

Period of Employment: 12 months (September through August) only for the duration that the NRSA fellowship is active.

Considering the costs of salaries, fringe benefits and employer contributions to health insurance, it is anticipated that the annual cost of the TPEP will be approximately \$20K per postdoctoral fellowship recipient for each year (12 months) up to the maximum amount of funds available for support of their respective NRSA grants by the TAMU/OVPR, AgriLife or TEES. It is also anticipated that departments/division and colleges/units will be asked to share 50% of the cost with TAMU/OVPR, AgriLife or TEES. This could result in doubling the size of these prestigious awards coming to our campus.

Postdoctoral Research Associates at this level of pay will be required to submit time sheets and will be eligible for overtime pay if they work over 40 hours a week. However, no NRSA Trainee on a TPEP appointment may be allowed to work more than 10 hours a week (25% time) as a part-time employee in accordance with the NRSA NIH guidelines.

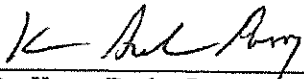
Request for Funding:

Request for funding to support a NRSA TPEP should be submitted as a memorandum through Principal Investigator's (PI) department or unit head and dean to the entity in which the NRSA grant is awarded (TAMU, AgriLife or TEES). Request for funding should be sent to the TAMU/OVPR for TAMU grants and to TEES or AgriLife for TEES and AgriLife grants respectively. Requests should include the following:

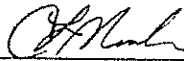
- Name of NRSA Postdoctoral Fellow to be offered part-time employment
- Name and Number of the NRSA Grant and the name of the awardee on the grant (TAMU, AgriLife or TEES)
- Sources of funds that will fund the part-time employment including matching commitments
- A brief description of how the eligibility criteria will be addressed
- A general description as to the 25% part-time employment role of the TPEP employee
- Signatories from the appropriate official committing the matching funds

NRSA TPEP approvals are subject to the available of funds and this program may result in higher demand that can be funded or partially funded by TAMU/OVPR, AgriLife or TEES. Other sources of non-federal, non-sponsored funds may be used to provide part-time employment subject to the same requirements as outlined in this program and in the NIH NRSA guidelines. If additional funds become available for the NRSA trainees programs, TAMU/OVPR, AgriLife or TEES may expand the assistance program to help fund other fellowship and trainee programs in addition to the NIH NRSA postdoctoral program.

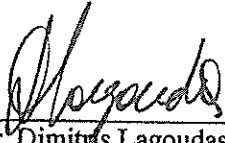
Approved:



Dr. Karen Butler-Purry, Interim Vice President for Research
Texas A&M University



Dr. Craig Nessler, Director
Texas A&M AgriLife Research



Dr. Dimitris Lagoudas, Deputy Director
Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station