

Student Travel Fellowships for the NIDCD Research Symposium in Clinical Aphasiology (May 27, 2026) and Clinical Aphasiology Conference (Tuesday, May 26, 2025 – Friday, May 29, 2026)

Description of the Fellowship Program

The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communicative Disorders (NIDCD) has funded a conference grant to the Clinical Aphasiology Conference to meet two aims. First, this grant supports the Research Symposium in Clinical Aphasiology (RSCA), embedded in the schedule of the Clinical Aphasiology Conference (CAC). Historically, this Research Symposium has been focused on cutting-edge theory and data on aphasia and related neurological communication disorders and their assessment, treatment, and neurocognitive bases. In the current funding cycle for the years 2023-2028, the RSCA has shifted its focus to include public health and health disparities, especially as they relate to aphasia, related communication disorders, and the underlying health conditions that cause them.

Second, the grant provides funds for approximately 15 students to participate in the RSCA, and, by extension, the CAC. Student fellows will be reimbursed up to \$1 700 for travel and conference expenses. The RSCA also provides special mentoring opportunities for student fellows. These include a host mentor assigned to each individual fellow, a reception with host mentors and other fellows, the RSCA lunch in which fellows have an opportunity to interact with the RSCA keynote speaker, the RSCA poster session where fellows present and discuss their research, and the RSCA mentoring breakfast, in which student fellows interact with seasoned CAC investigators about topics personal and/or professional. Publication mentoring for work presented at the RSCA is also available.

Any student who is active in an academic program¹ and who has earned authorship² on a paper submitted to the CAC can apply for an NIDCD Student Fellowship, subject to the following limitations: First, each abstract submission may be associated with only one fellowship application, and each fellowship application may be associated with only one abstract submission. Second, student fellowship applicants and their co-authors must agree to have the abstract presented as a poster. Most student fellows will be asked to prepare posters, regardless of their preferred presentation format. These posters will be presented together in a single session and will be posted together in some form on the CAC website, after the meeting. A small number of highly meritorious fellowship abstracts may be selected for presentation as a platform or roundtable, at the discretion of the Organizing Committee in consultation with the CAC Program Chair. However, students who do not wish to present in the poster format, or whose co-authors do not agree to have the paper presented in this format, should not apply.

Also, federal employees, including post-doctoral trainees employed by the Veterans Health Administration, are not eligible for reimbursement by the RSCA Fellowship Program. Otherwise eligible federal employees may apply for the program, and if selected, may present at and participate in the RSCA and associated mentoring activities, but they will not receive reimbursement for any travel or conference-related expenses.

¹ Applicants must be enrolled in a degree-granting academic program or a post-doctoral fellowship for at least one full semester during the 2025-2026 academic year.

² 'Earned authorship' denotes a significant and real involvement in the genesis of the research question(s) and/or study conduct and interpretation.

Abstracts should follow the format and instructions as specified in or associated with the CAC Call for Papers.

The criteria for awarding RSCA fellowships are: (1) Scientific merit of the submitted abstract, as rated by the RSCA and/or CAC Program Committee; (2) Commitment to a research career, as demonstrated by a personal statement and brief CV; (3) Authorship, with preference given to first authors; (4) Nationality, with preference given to U.S. citizens; and (5) while the Committee may award fellowships to students who have received it in previous years, preference will be given to applicants who have not previously received an RSCA fellowship. Criteria 1-2 are weighted equally, at twice the weight of criteria 3 and 4. Criterion 5 is given half the weight of criteria 3 and 4. The RSCA Organizing Committee determines the awardees.³

Application Instructions

The fellowship application process is integrated with the CAC abstract submission process. There are three parts to the application. Part 1 consists of demographic, contact, and other information that must be provided as part of the online abstract submission process. Part 2 is a brief written statement and CV that should be prepared according to instructions provided below. Part 3 is a form on which to provide assurances related to program participation and the applicant's status as a student or post-doctoral fellow. It must be signed by the applicant and the applicant's advisor or department chair. Parts 2 and 3 must be saved as PDFs and uploaded at the appropriate step in the online abstract submission process. **Applicants should read and complete each part carefully and follow the instructions for submitting them. Incomplete applications will not be considered. The application deadline is the same as the CAC abstract submission deadline, Monday, January 26, 2026, at 11:59 pm PST.** We look forward to receiving and reviewing your application. Questions should be addressed to Will Hula at william.hula@va.gov with "RSCA application question" in the subject line.

RSCA Committee members:

Nichol Castro, Ph.D., M.S.; Mackenzie Fama, Ph.D., Stacy Harnish, Ph.D., William Hula, Ph.D.; Amy Rodriguez, Ph.D.; Chaleece Sandberg, Ph.D., Rajani Sebastian, Ph.D.

³ Committee members recuse themselves from evaluating submissions from their own current or former students.

2026 NIDCD Research Symposium in Clinical Aphasiology Fellowship Application

Part 1

Part 1 of the application consists of the scientific abstract and must be submitted via the 2026 Clinical Aphasiology Conference abstract submission portal, which will be linked from clinicalaphasiologyconference.org. Per the instructions provided in the abstract submission portal, the abstract PDF file should be given a filename containing only one or more keywords from the abstract title. Your name should not be included in the content or the filename of the abstract submission.

The following information will be requested of NIDCD Fellowship applicants as part of the online CAC abstract submission process: name, email address, phone number, authorship order on the associated abstract, race/ethnicity, career aspiration (type of position and occupational setting desired), institutional affiliation, degree program (BA/BS, MA/MS, PhD, post-doctoral), gender, US citizenship status, and number of times this fellowship has been received previously.

Part 2

After composing Part 2, save it as a PDF file and upload it along with Part 3 to following location: [RSCA Application Parts 2 & 3 upload link](#). Both Parts 2 and 3 should be given filenames with the following format: ‘ApplicantLastName_AbstractKeyWords_part1.pdf’ That is, the filename should consist of the applicant’s last name, the same keywords used to name the Part 1 abstract submission, and either ‘part1’ or ‘part2’, each separated by an underscore character.

Also, please include your name and the full title of your abstract in the text of Part 2. The body of Part 2 should include (1) a brief personal statement (1 page maximum) that provides an overview of your career goals and description of how attending CAC and the RSCA will help you achieve your goals, and (2) a brief CV (3 pages maximum) that highlights your educational experiences and achievements and your research experiences and contributions.

Part 3

See the next page for part 3.

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This page should be saved as a separate single-page document, signed manually or electronically, saved as a PDF file and uploaded along with Part 2 to the URL provided on the preceding page.

SIGNATURES:

I certify that (1) the applicant is an enrolled student or post-doctoral fellow during the 2025-2026 academic year; and (2) the applicant has earned his/her authorship on the submitted abstract.

Adviser or Department chair (Printed Name)

Adviser or Department chair (Signature)

Date

If offered a fellowship, (1) I certify that I have all co-authors' permission to present the paper as a poster; (2) I agree to send an electronic copy of the poster to the Chair of the Research Symposium Organizing Committee immediately after the conference; and (3) I agree to complete all evaluation forms pertaining to the experience in a timely manner.

Student Fellow Applicant (Signature)

Date