

Call for applications

Forschungswerkstatt – Your idea for tomorrow April 2026

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1 Aim and purpose of the call for applications

The *Forschungswerkstatt* is a support program run by the Baden-Württemberg Foundation that helps early-career scientists develop their research ideas. This creates opportunities for scientists in Baden-Württemberg to take the first steps in their careers toward habilitation and professorship.

Young scientists in the early stages of their careers who are at a transitional stage (shortly before completing their doctorate or up to two years after completing their doctorate) can apply for funding of up to €100,000 for a period of up to one year to develop their research ideas to such an extent that they can then be submitted for implementation to renowned national and international funding bodies (BMFTR, DFG, etc.).

The *Forschungswerkstatt* provides straightforward funding for your own position during transitional periods between one position and the next. Scientific careers are often characterized by gaps in employment. Contracts usually expire before or at the end of the desired qualification without follow-up funding already secured. There is a lack of time and, in some cases, financial resources to pursue the next research project. The *Forschungswerkstatt* gives aspiring researchers independence and security – conditions that create space for free thinking and promote the development of innovative ideas for tomorrow's research. In the long term, the program helps to attract third-party funding to Baden-Württemberg and supports aspiring and talented scientists in the early stages of their careers. The *Forschungswerkstatt* thus contributes to the excellent research of tomorrow.

In response to a successful first call for proposals in the fall of 2025, which demonstrated strong demand from the scientific community, funding for the program has been increased. As a result, approximately 900,000 euros are available for the *Forschungswerkstatt* in this call for applications.

2 Eligibility

Eligible applicants are scientists who, at the time of application, are nearing completion of their doctoral studies; that is, they must have submitted their dissertation by the planned project start date. Eligibility remains valid for up to two years after the completion of the doctoral degree (the date on the doctoral certificate applies). Periods of absence, such as parental leave, are considered.

The *Forschungswerkstatt* is intended for those currently working in academia who, due to temporary contracts, lack certainty regarding the continued funding of their positions. Therefore, for example, returning to academia from the private sector or combined clinical-research positions are not eligible for funding.

Applicants are eligible for funding provided that they have no other source of financing for their own position during the relevant period, or only a partial source (up to 50%).

The applicant must have an institutional affiliation insofar as a scientific institution agrees and undertakes to act as the employer for the funded person during the term of the grant. For the purposes of this call for applications, all universities in Baden-Württemberg and non-profit non-university research institutions based in Baden-Württemberg are eligible as such institutions.

3 Terms and conditions

The aim of the *Forschungswerkstatt* is to give researchers the opportunity to shape their own careers in the early stages and, by funding their own positions, to give them the time to draft and submit a research proposal to a funding organization.

The subject of every proposal submitted to the *Forschungswerkstatt* should be a promising research idea. A research idea is defined as one for which only initial indications and a rough concept are currently available, and for which further consideration and preliminary work are still needed to develop it into a concrete proposal. A research idea is not a comprehensive, fully developed project.

Funding under this program supports researchers in developing their research ideas through to the preparation and submission of a complete follow-up grant application. The goal is to submit at least one research proposal to a funding agency within the requested funding period. Waiting periods until the funding agency's decision is also permitted to be specified in the application. The activities during the waiting period must be described, and a clear connection to the intended research project must be evident.

Funding is available only to individuals; however, the developed research proposal may result in either an individual or a collaborative project. Only one application may be submitted per person.

Funding is provided in the form of a grant designated for a specific purpose, covering the full cost of the project. It is limited to a period of at least three and up to twelve months. The maximum amount per application is 100,000 euros.

The grant covers personnel, material, and travel expenses.

Personnel costs primarily include the costs associated with the applicant's own position. Funds for the applicant's own position are generally intended solely to finance an employment relationship at an institution eligible to receive grants. Funding for the applicant's own position is available at a rate of 50% to 100%. The rates for a postdoc salary apply in accordance with the current DFG personnel funding rates of up to 7,350 euros per month (as of 2026). In addition to funding for the applicant's own position, a limited amount of funding may also be provided for the costs of unqualified and qualified support staff who perform only minor preparatory tasks, such as research or laboratory work.

Material costs include consumables specifically required for the implementation of the project, as well as items with a purchase price of up to 800 euros.

Investment funds for items with a purchase price exceeding 800 euros, standard equipment, and overhead costs are not eligible for funding. All costs must be explained in the budget as part of the application.

The selection of applications takes place in two steps. First, the applications are reviewed for formal correctness, specifically to determine whether the applicants belong to the program's target group and meet the specified criteria. The application is then evaluated in light of the call for proposals' objectives. Key criteria include a compelling research concept, promising prospects, and relevance to Baden-Württemberg, as well as concrete and feasible submission options.

If the total funding volume of the reviewed applications exceeds the available funds, a lottery will determine which projects receive funding. Applicants can expect written notification regarding their application via email approximately six weeks after the application deadline. Approval may be subject to conditions that must be met for the contract to be drawn up and finalized.

Selected projects may only begin after both contracting parties have signed a grant agreement. In addition to the Baden-Württemberg Foundation, the contracting party is the institution that acts as the employer for the funded individual. The earliest project start date is September 1, 2026. The latest project start date is six months after the application deadline, i.e., November 15, 2026.

There is no guarantee that an application will be considered. If the application is rejected, the Baden-Württemberg Foundation will notify the applicant via email. No reasons will be provided for the rejection of the project. By submitting the application, applicants agree to these terms and conditions.

4 Official channel and deadline

Applications must be signed by an authorized representative of the institution to be legally binding.

Applications must be submitted electronically in German or English via email to forschung@bwstiftung.de. The main application and all five attachments must be attached as separate documents.

Applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on **May 15, 2026** (deadline).

5 Extent and content of the application

The project proposal may be written in German or English and must include the following points:

Main proposal (see template)

- 1) General information
- 2) Research idea
- 3) Schedule
- 4) Personal academic profile
- 5) Declaration regarding the exclusion of double funding
- 6) Signature of the researcher
- 7) Legally binding signature

Attachments

- 8) List of publications (pdf)
- 9) Curriculum vitae (max. 1 page, pdf)
- 10) Letter of recommendation from a person with expertise in the field who belongs to the institution that will fulfill the employer function (pdf)
- 11) Declaration by the institution on the fulfillment of the employer function (see template)
- 12) Financial plan (see template):

- Personnel costs
- Material costs
- Travel expenses

All templates provided must be used when submitting applications <https://www.bwstiftung.de/de/ausschreibung/forschungswerkstatt-deine-idee-fuer-morgen>.

Applications that do not meet the above requirements may be excluded from evaluation and rejected without further justification.

6 Contact persons

The *Forschungswerkstatt* is a program of the Baden-Württemberg Stiftung.

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7 Data processing

The controller within the meaning of the GDPR is Baden-Württemberg Stiftung gGmbH, Kriegsbergstraße 42, 70174 Stuttgart, Germany, tel.: +49 (0)711 248 476-0, info@bwstiftung.de, managing director: Theresia Bauer. The data protection officer of BW Stiftung gGmbH, Frank Grossmann, can be contacted at datenschutz@bwstiftung.de.

By submitting an application, the applicant agrees that personal information such as name, university, project name, and relevant project details such as duration and funding amount, etc., may be stored and processed by BW Stiftung for the purposes of application and evaluation. The aforementioned processing is based on Art. 6 (1) (1) (a), (b), and (c) GDPR. The data will be deleted as soon as it is no longer required for the aforementioned purposes.

Further information, in particular regarding your rights, can be found at www.bwstiftung.de/datenschutz/.