

Request for Proposals (RFP) Supporting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Cultivating a New Generation of Rheumatologists

The Arthritis Foundation (AF) is committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in order to support the training of a diverse generation of rheumatologists and to improve health outcomes for all patients with rheumatic diseases, especially those living with arthritis. Two complementary AF initiatives were launched in 2021 and will continue in 2022 to support our aspirations.

The first program aims to provide seed funding to support impactful and innovative research to improve health outcomes across different racial and ethnic groups, as well as among various categories of socioeconomic status.

The second program has a goal to increase diversity in the next generation of rheumatologists, for those who are physicians or physician/scientists. The ability of proposed projects to have a lasting impact and to be sustained beyond the award period, with potential for their findings to lead directly to advocacy and to reduce structural barriers, are considered important for success. Focus on arthritis research and curriculum development is preferred.

I. Health Equity Research (AF will provide awardees up to \$25,000/year for a 2-year term)

While diagnostics and therapeutics have improved for many people living with rheumatic disease in the US, racial/ethnic as well as socioeconomic status disparities continue to negatively impact patient outcomes. Therefore, we welcome new research proposals to better define the contributing factors and innovative solutions to address existing disparities in care and outcomes of rheumatic diseases.

1. Proposals will be evaluated based on their impact. Innovation will be considered as well. Funds can be used for salary, supplies and/or other support, but not for capital equipment.
2. Eligible applicants include faculty members with an interest in rheumatic diseases and/or rheumatology fellows who have completed the first year of clinical training and are embarking on their research training. Rheumatology fellows are encouraged to collaborate with an established full-time faculty member with interests in DEI research. Multi-PI proposals, including fellows, with cross-discipline expertise with at least one PI affiliated with a Division of Rheumatology are welcome.
3. Innovative and impactful proposals, particularly involving new investigators, are highly encouraged.

Application:

- a. Proposal (**limit 5 pages, including references**)
- b. CVs of PIs
- c. Description of existing Division activities to support DEI (**limit 1 page**)
- d. Description of Division engagement with the Arthritis Foundation (2018-present)
- e. Division Chief/Department Chair letter of support including confirmation of salary support for PI (**Only one letter will be accepted and may not exceed 1 page in length.**)

II. Curriculum Development Solutions to Growing the Diversity in the Rheumatology Workforce (AF will provide awardees up to a maximum of \$34,000 over the course of one year).

To cultivate the next generation of rheumatologists that reflect the diversity of our patients, the AF is seeking innovative programs to attract underrepresented (URM)* medical students and residents to Rheumatology. There are two required components for the 1-year proposal.

1. As exposure to Rheumatology has recently diminished in the curriculum of many medical schools, up to \$10,000 will be provided to develop and support innovative curriculum to address racial and/or ethnic issues in rheumatology, including health care disparities, and help to attract URM to Rheumatology. These funds can be used for salary, supplies or other support to develop innovative and/or effective ways of teaching trainees.
2. Each institution can recruit a combination of the following:
 - URM medical students for clinical Rheumatology rotations (1 month)
 - URM medical students for Rheumatology-related research rotations (3 months)
 - URM residents for clinical Rheumatology rotations (1 month)

Stipends of \$4,000 will be provided for each 1-month rotation to offset any travel/housing costs or attendance to a Rheumatology meeting. A stipend of up to \$12,000 will be provided for a 3-month Rheumatology-related research rotation to offset supply costs, travel/housing costs or attendance at a Rheumatology/scientific meeting.

Proposals involving more than one institution or training program to maximize recruitment of participants are welcome. The principal institution must have an ACGME-accredited adult or pediatric Rheumatology fellowship program. Programs with active fellowship programs and a high level of participation with local or national AF activities are highly desired.

Application:

- a. Description of curriculum development (**limit 1 page**)
- b. Clinical track: Description of medical student or resident curriculum (**limit 1 page**)
- c. Research track: Description of research opportunities and curriculum (**limit 1 page**)
- d. CV of PI and key mentors
- e. Budget with documentation of PI salary support
- f. Description of existing Division activities to support DEI (**limit 1 page**)
- g. Description of Division engagement with the Arthritis Foundation (2018-present)
- h. Division Chief/Department Chair letter of support (**Only one letter will be accepted and may not exceed 1 page in length.**)

*URM groups (as defined by the NIH) include Blacks or African Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

Review Criteria/Selection Process

- Applications will be scored by a peer-review panel, in consultation with patient advocates and Arthritis Foundation staff.
- Grantees will be selected based on strength of alignment to the goals and eligibility parameters as described above.

Submission

- All applications should be submitted using the Arthritis Foundation online portal for this program, available at <https://proposalcentral.com/GrantOpportunities.asp>.
- A separate application will need to be submitted for each initiative, using the designated template which can be downloaded in ProposalCentral.
- Please contact the Arthritis Foundation as soon as possible to indicate if you intend to apply. Please email AFScience@arthritis.org with subject line: **DEI - Yes**
- All applications should be submitted by 5:00 PM Eastern time (Atlanta, GA) on the deadline date.
- **Please expect that any application submitted after deadline, incomplete, or failing to otherwise adhere to instructions will be administratively declined.**

Formatting

- Margins should be greater than or equal to 1/2" on all sides.
- Fonts size should be no less than 12 points. Font must be Arial.
- Applications must be written in English and formatted such that, if printed, would print to 8.5"x11" paper.
- Please be mindful of the word limits for each section.
- PDF file formats are preferred. In order to allow for administrative notes to be added, editing permissions **must not** be restricted and files **must not** be password protected.

Key Dates

- Institutions may apply for start dates 1/2/2023 - 12/31/2023.
- Date application and documents due: **Monday, June 6, 2022, 5:00 pm Eastern**
- Date of final status notification: **Friday, September 16, 2022**