



Rheumatology Research Foundation

Advancing Treatment | Finding Cures

Community Practice Innovation Award

The mission of the Rheumatology Research Foundation is to advance research and training to improve the health of people with rheumatic diseases.

The purpose of the **Community Practice Innovation (CPI) Award** is to promote and grow ideas that are directly generated from the rheumatology practice community that will have a **meaningful impact on practice implementation, efficiency and sustainability**. These grants are meant to support projects which can be successfully conducted with the resources available in a clinical practice setting. Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Quality improvement studies,
- Implementation projects,
- Access/workflow/shared care/practice efficiency initiatives,
- Practice based learning collaboratives,
- Quality improvement, resource use or cost analysis projects and
- Feasibility or pilot studies aimed at generating preliminary data to support larger definitive studies.

To help disseminate the lessons learned during the award period to the broader rheumatology community, the Foundation will require a commitment by the practitioner to disseminate the findings in an appropriate, transparent, and timely manner. This includes presentations at local/regional/state society meetings and/or a Foundation-coordinated session at the ACR Convergence. In addition, award recipients should describe how any tools/toolkits/resources developed with Foundation funds will be shared with the broader rheumatology community when appropriate.

Annually, the Foundation's Scientific Advisory Council will choose one recipient of this award to receive the special designation of the **Norman B. Gaylis, MD Clinical Research Award**. This designated award was established in 2015 with a generous commitment from Norman B. Gaylis, MD.

Award Amount: Up to \$80,000 for 1-year, competitive renewal available for year 2 funding (up to \$80,000) based on need and progress achieved during year 1.

Required, non-binding letters of intent are due January 15th. All applications must be submitted by 5:00 pm ET on the deadline day via email to foundation@rheumatology.org.

Letter of Intent Deadline	Application Deadline	Notification	Award Start Date
January 15, 2026	February 2, 2026	May 2, 2026	July 1, 2026

Guidelines

Eligibility: To be eligible for this award, the applicant must:

- Have an active [ACR](#) or [ARP](#) membership at the time of submission and for the duration of the award;
- Hold a doctoral-level degree (MD, DO, PhD, DNP, DPT, PsyD, EdD);
- Have a current license to practice medicine or other interprofessional specialty and be in good medical standing;
- Be employed in a US-based, community practice setting including:
 - Solo practice
 - Single specialty group practice
 - Multi-specialty group practice
 - Hospital system-based practice
- May **NOT** hold a faculty appointment with an academic institution (adjunct appointments are acceptable).
- Have the ability, with necessary consultation available through Foundation staff, to manage a grant administratively and fiscally,
- **If appropriate** for the proposed project, demonstrate certification of training in human subjects' research and the ability to obtain human subjects research approval and oversight for the proposed research for the duration of the award; Documentation of IRB approval or exemption will be required prior to receiving funding. One recommended source for human subjects' research training is the [Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative](#).
- Meet citizenship and other eligibility requirements as outlined in the [Awards and Grants policies](#).

Please note the following:

- Community practices receiving this award bear the responsibility of properly reporting the award income, determining tax impact, and paying any resulting taxes. Upon award receipt, the practice will provide the Foundation with the most recent Form W-9. The Foundation will issue a Form 1099 if deemed necessary.
- Practices receiving this award assume all responsibilities and obligations to comply with relevant laws and applicable regulatory requirements (e.g., Good Clinical Practice for conducting research).
- Scientific and/or budgetary overlap between Foundation grants and other funding sources (including pharmaceutical funding and other foundations) is not permitted.
- Practitioners interested in using data from the ACR's RISE registry as part of their proposed research project need to get their data use request approved before applying for funding. Please visit [RISE for Research](#) for more information on RISE data. RISE data requests should be submitted at least 2 months prior to the Foundation's application deadline.



Review Criteria

Applications will be reviewed and approved based on the overall merit of the concept proposal. This award will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- Relevance of the proposal to the Foundation's mission to improve the health of people with rheumatic disease
- Rigor of the methods and innovation of the proposal
- Feasibility of project
- Expected results or output that will be valuable to the rheumatology practice community

Award Terms and Funding

Funding for this grant will begin on July 1, 2026 and extend through June 30, 2027. Grants will be awarded for a one-year period. Competitive renewal may be available for year 2 funding based on need, progress achieved during year 1 and available funds. Applicants may request a total annual budget up to \$80,000 per year. Financial support will be provided as outlined below:

Date	Amount
July 2026	Up to \$40,000
January 2027	Up to \$40,000

Indirect Costs: Indirect costs are capped at 8% of the total budget.

Unexpended Funds: All unexpended funds must be returned to the Foundation at the close of the award term. Requests for no-cost extensions will be considered on an individual basis and granted or denied at the discretion of the Foundation Scientific Advisory Council.

The Foundation will not compensate for the following:

- Support for ongoing clinical programs that are part of an organization's routine operations
- Purchases of equipment unrelated to the proposed study
- Construction and new facilities
- Hiring or reimbursing staff who are not directly dedicated to the proposed study

Award Requirements

Progress Report: The recipient must provide the Foundation with a progress report (template provided) identifying progress towards the aims of the proposal. Failure to submit required reports by the deadline may result in penalties, including funding delays and/or grant cancellation.

Final Report: At the close of the award term, the recipient must provide the Foundation with a final report (template provided) describing completion of deliverables. In addition, the final report must contain a final financial reconciliation

indicating how funds were allocated and whether any unexpended funds remain. Final reports will be due in August 2025.

Award Evaluations: To help the Foundation track the outcomes and impact of all awards, recipients may be asked to complete periodic online evaluations for up to 5 years after the award end date. This information is vital to improve and modify the existing award structure for future recipients.

Communication of Findings: The Foundation will require a commitment by the practitioner to disseminate the findings in an appropriate, transparent, and timely manner. The support of the Foundation should be acknowledged in presentations, papers, etc.

REQUIRED Letter of Intent

A required, non-binding letter of intent should be emailed to foundation@rheumatology.org by January 15, 2026 communicating your intent to submit an application. The email should include the following information:

- Your name and contact information.
- Your place of employment.
- Your tentative project title.
- A 1-2 paragraph high-level summary of the project you intend to submit. Please note how your project will have a meaningful impact on practice implementation, efficiency and/or sustainability.

By providing the Foundation with this information, you will help us ensure we have an adequate number of reviewers with the appropriate expertise recruited for the peer review panel.

Application Instructions

All applications must be submitted by 5:00 pm ET on the deadline day via email to foundation@rheumatology.org.

Please download the pdf application template that will include applicant and project site information, project information, budget and benchmarks for success. In addition, you will need to submit CVs for all key personnel and your project proposal as attachments.

Use the information below as a guide on how to prepare for each application component mentioned above.

Applicant and Project Site Information

You will be asked to confirm your eligibility and provide contact information in this section.

Project Information

The information in this section is general information about the grant submission.

➤ **Project Title (limit 200 characters including spaces)**

Make your title specific and detailed. It should clearly state the topic of your proposal.

➤ **Project Summary (limit 2,000 characters including spaces)**

Succinctly describe the concept and its importance to the practice of rheumatology

➤ **Keywords**

Choose three keywords that accurately describe the project. If the application focuses on a specific disease, please include it as a keyword.

Key Personnel

A curriculum vitae (CV) is required for each individual listed. **Each CV may not exceed 5 pages in length and should be submitted in pdf format.**

Budget Period Detail/Justification

Applications must include an itemized budget up to a maximum of \$80,000 annually. Budget and justification should detail direct costs, including:

- **Personnel:** Describe the specific function of each individual receiving salary support. Also include the total time they will allocate to this proposed project.
- **Consultant/Contractor Costs:** Describe the services to be performed and include the number of days of anticipated consultation, the expected rate of compensation, travel, per diem, and other related costs.
- **Cost of IRB Approval:** If applicable, costs associated with local or centralized IRB.
- **Supplies and Expenses:** Describe all supplies and expenses needed for the execution of the proposed project including any administrative costs associated with the startup and maintenance of your proposed project (administrative costs may include institutional review fees, communications, data access, publication and other dissemination costs, etc.).
- **Equipment:** This may include any equipment needed to carry out the project. Purchases of equipment unrelated to the proposed study are not allowed.
- **Travel:** Include travel related to the proposed project. Be sure to include an estimate for airfare, ground transportation, accommodation, and per diem.
- **Indirect Costs:** Indirect costs are allowable and capped at 8% of the total budget. Indirect costs are frequently referred to as overhead expenses (for example, rent and utilities) and general and administrative expenses (for example, accounting department costs and personnel department costs).

Project Proposal

The project proposal should be limited to 5 pages and include the following:

Introduction: This section should describe the overall importance of the proposed project and introduce the main question (hypothesis) under investigation.

Specific Aims: List the broad, long-term objectives and the goal of the proposed project. The objectives should be clear and address the main question the project is trying to answer (hypothesis). Objectives should include the primary measures, any comparator groups, and the time point(s) of interest.

Background and Significance: Discuss the overall significance (need) of the proposed project making sure to answer why the work is important. Please note how your project will have a meaningful impact on practice implementation, efficiency and/or sustainability.

Project Design: Provide a detailed description of the project design and methodology. In this section, be specific and informative including:

- What do you intend to do?
- How will you accomplish the work within the one-year timeframe?
- What are your study population and selection criterion (if applicable)?
- Are there any potential biases/limitations associated with your design? If so, how do you propose to overcome or minimize them?
- What is your study design and plans for execution?
- Do you foresee any challenges? If so, how will you handle these challenges?
- How will the data be collected, protected, stored, analyzed, and interpreted?

Dissemination Plan- Per Foundation policies, research and/or resources developed with Foundation funds must be available to qualified individuals in the rheumatology community. Please describe how you plan to disseminate your project findings.

Note: If your project includes human subjects research, please contact the Foundation to obtain further instruction and assistance. Documentation of IRB **approval or exemption** will be required prior to receiving funding.

Benchmarks for Success - TEMPLATE PROVIDED

Applications should include a list of milestones (expected status of the project at various points in time) using the enclosed template. These milestones will be used to evaluate progress and to facilitate communication between the awardee and the Foundation Scientific Advisory Council. The milestones should reflect the specific aims of the proposal and be presented within the context of a pathway for determining or evaluating a potential target for treatment.

Appendix (Optional)

The appendix may not be more than **20 pages** in length. The appendix may not be used to circumvent the page limitations of the research plan. Items to be included in the appendix include but are not limited to the following:

- **Letters of Collaboration:** Letters of support and/or commitment from collaborators stating they will provide research resources, etc. as proposed in the application.
- **Supporting Materials:** Supplemental tables and figures, relevant publications, or manuscripts.